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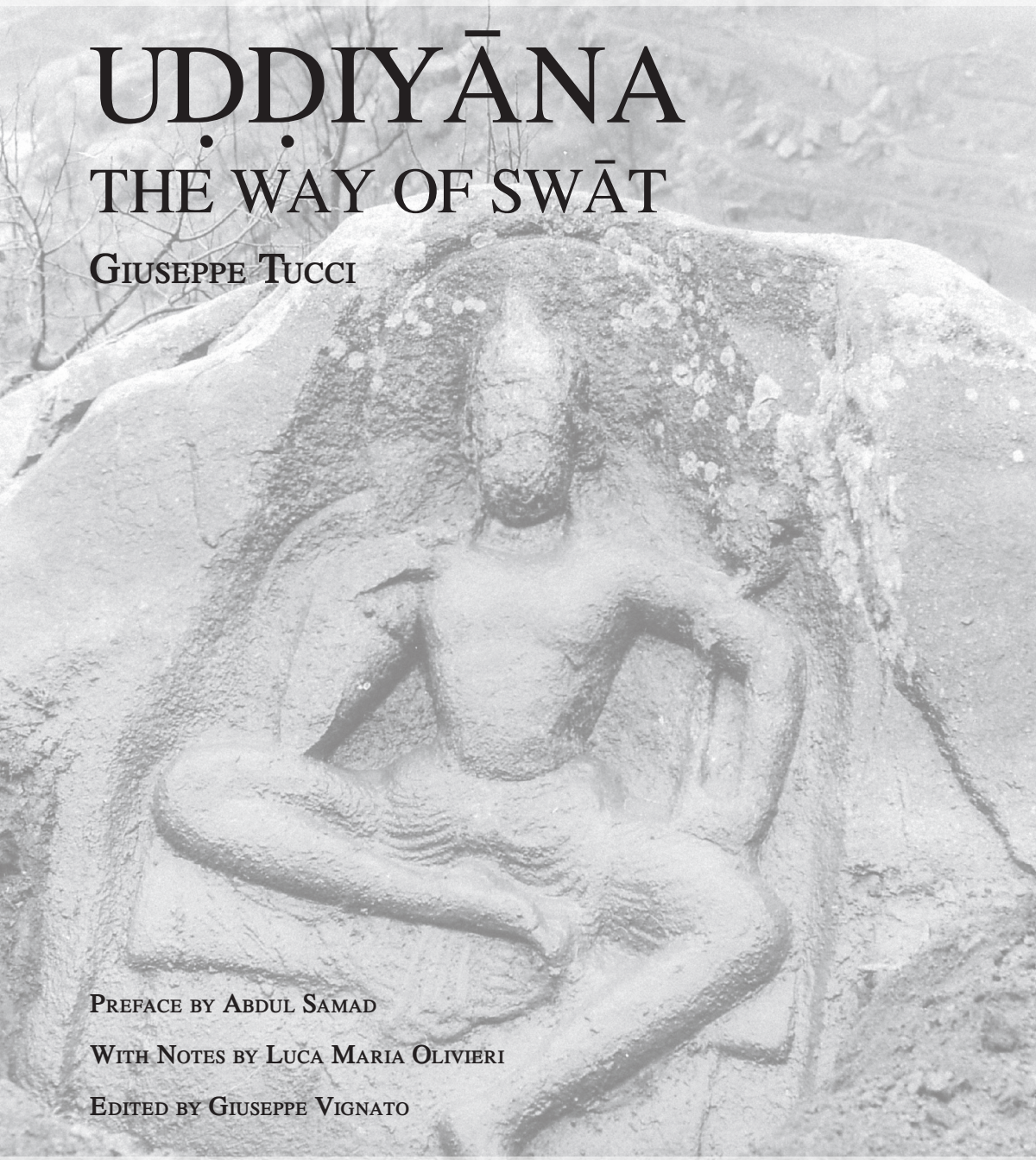
ARCHIVAL STUDIES, 5

UḌḌIYĀNA
THE WAY OF SWĀT

GIUSEPPE TUCCI



PREFACE BY ABDUL SAMAD

WITH NOTES BY LUCA MARIA OLIVIERI

EDITED BY GIUSEPPE VIGNATO

Sang-e-Meel Publications
Lahore - Pakistan

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Giuseppe Tucci

Preface by Abdul Samad

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Giuseppe Tucci

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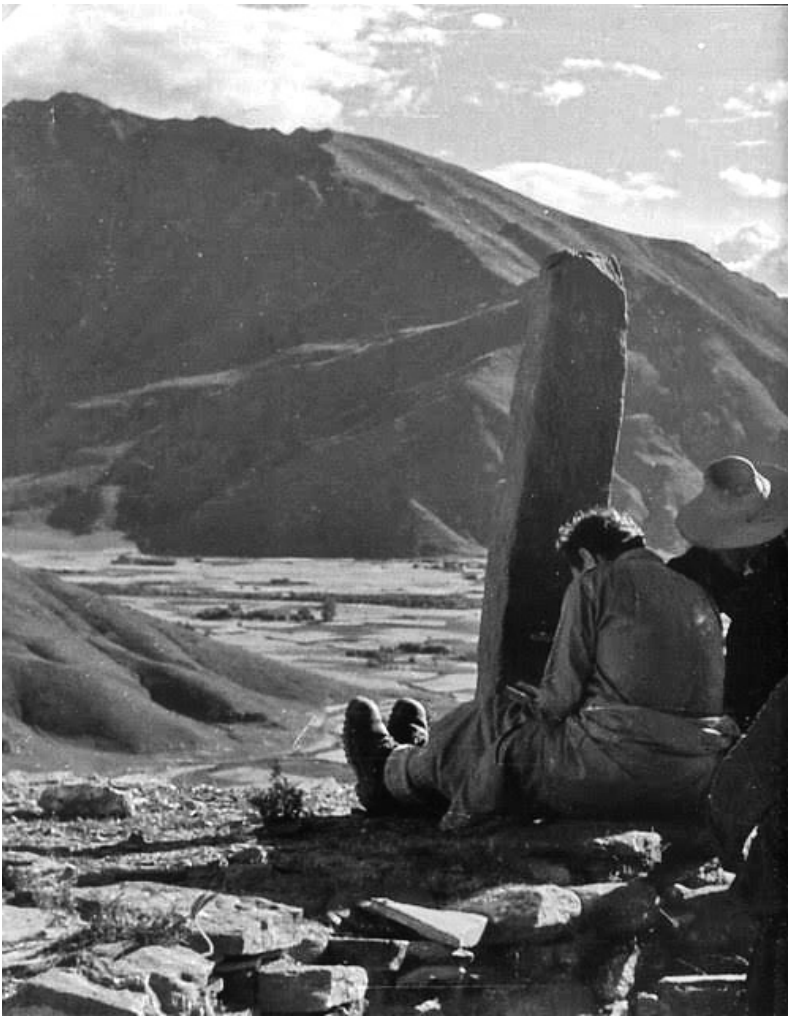

Giuseppe Tucci, Tibet 1948 (Photo IsMEO)

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Preface

Abdul Samad

Director, Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa

It is with immense pride and gratitude that I present this commemorative volume, celebrating the seventy years of archaeological research initiated by the Italian Archaeological Mission in Swat (1955-2025), a journey that finds its origins in the pioneering efforts of Professor Giuseppe Tucci.

Giuseppe Tucci, a towering figure in the fields of Asian Studies and Buddhist archaeology, first visited the Swat Valley in November 1955, at a time when access to this region was both politically sensitive and logistically challenging. His visit, accompanied by distinguished scholars such as Domenico Faccenna and Raoul Curiel, marked the beginning of a fruitful collaboration between the local communities, the Government of Pakistan, and the Italian scholarly tradition. This partnership, initiated under the patronage of the then Wali of Swat, Major General Miangul Jahanzeb, continues today under the patronage of the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Professor Tucci's interest in Swat had, however, been cultivated much earlier. During his expeditions in western Tibet in the 1930s, he unearthed rare Tibetan manuscripts detailing pilgrimages to Uḍḍiyāna, the ancient name for Swat, revered as a spiritual homeland of Vajrayāna Buddhism. His publication of these manuscripts in 1940 first brought global attention to Swat's unique historical and religious significance. Although he initially sought to travel to Swat around 1949-1950 (see *infra*), political circumstances delayed his plans until the historic 1955 expedition.

This volume brings together two of Tucci's seminal works: a revised edition of *Tibetan Pilgrims in the Swāt Valley* and the first Pakistani edition

of his celebrated *La Via dello Swat* ("The Way of Swat"). In addition, the current Director of the Italian Archaeological Mission, Prof. Luca M. Olivieri, has contributed three important scholarly notes that further illuminate the findings and provide updates based on seven decades of subsequent archaeological research.

Particularly noteworthy is the discussion around Barikot, today regarded as a key site in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gandharan archaeology, where collaborative excavations have continued for over forty years, enriching our understanding of Swat's layered historical past.

The inclusion of historic photographs from the 1963 Italian edition alongside contemporary images vividly illustrates how both archaeology and everyday life in Swat have evolved over the past seventy years.

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to Professor Giuseppe Vignato of Peking University for his meticulous editing of this volume and to all those who have worked tirelessly to preserve and advance the legacy initiated by Tucci.

Today, as we reflect on the profound contributions of Giuseppe Tucci, we are reminded that archaeology is not merely the study of the past; it is a bridge connecting civilizations, communities, and generations. Tucci's vision, perseverance, and academic brilliance have left an indelible mark on the cultural heritage of Pakistan, a legacy that continues to inspire and guide us.

Introduction

Giuseppe Vignato

The Italian Mission in Swāt has its origin in Tucci's love for Tibet. In fact, as soon as he found that ancient sources unanimously indicate Uḍḍiyāna as the birthplace of Padmasambhava, the great mystic who introduced Tantric Buddhim in Tibet, he wanted to know more about this area. In 1940 he published a partial translation and commentary of the travelogues of two Tibetan pilgrims who visited the birthplace of the great master in the 13th and 17th centuries. It was on the basis of these texts (see also Tucci 1931) that Tucci identified Uḍḍiyāna with Swāt; so, he first visited the region in 1955 when he established the Mission, while the archaeological fieldwork started the following year.

The early efforts of this project were dedicated to the excavation of Buddhist remains. Gradually, other periods and facets of the ancient society were considered. After almost seventy years of uninterrupted excavations and fieldwork, the Mission has made available a clear archaeological picture of the Swāt Valley from the Neolithic, through Bronze and Iron Ages, to the Buddhist and Islamic periods. The results of these methodologically advanced excavations have become a standard reference for the whole Gandhara region.

The present volume is the Pakistani edition of Tucci's book *La Via dello Swat* to scholars and other interested readers. Intended to be an agile and updated text, it also includes Tucci's *Travels of Tibetan Pilgrims*, published in 1940, and two notes by Luca M. Olivieri. The first on the itinerary of one of the two pilgrims, sTag ts'aṅ ras pa and Orgyan pa, which includes the identifications provided by Tucci in 1958 and 1977. The second note deals

with a toponym in the Tibetan *Blue Annals*, Vajrasthāna/Vajirasthāna, which has now been identified as Barikot.

We chose the text of the 1978 second edition of *La Via dello Swat* because, besides Tucci's very first impressions, includes his evaluation of the first 20 years of excavations; for the illustrative material, instead, we preferred the photos Tucci had chosen for the first edition in 1963.

Here, Tucci's text is followed by a substantial article by L. M. Olivieri that illustrates all that has become known through seventy years of continuous excavation by the Italian Archaeological Mission.

The experienced reader will note that we chose not to include Tucci's seminal article 'On Swāt. The Dards and connected problems' (1977). The reason is that it is a well-known text, available both in print (it has been reprinted two times) and online (Callieri and Filigenzi 1997; repr. by TIAC, Quaid-e-Azam University 2013).

This volume is published in the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan founded by Giuseppe Tucci in 1955.

We want to express our sincere gratitude to Ms. Xuan Yali of *WAKSAW-Uddiyana Archaeological Alliance* for sponsoring the English translation, Giuliano Perozzi who translated the Italian original, and Zhang Xingjian who elaborated the travel maps of the Tibetan pilgrims.

Editorial notes and Conventions

Giuseppe Vignato

For a friendlier use, the bibliography of the different sections has been unified in a consistent format and appended in the References at the end of the volume. The Chronological List aims at aiding the reader through the different historical phases. Maps, showing the journey of the Tibetan pilgrims and of the major archaeological sites in Swāt, have been elaborated and annexed to the volume. The book is illustrated with two sets of photographs. Besides the photographs originally published in the 1963 edition of *La via dello Swat* [*La via dello Svat*], showing life then, we have added more recent photos which will help the reader visualize Swāt "70 years later". While Tucci's photographs do not have a reference in the text, some of the others inserted to illustrate the additional texts are instead referenced whenever it was deemed necessary. The map originally published by Tucci in *Via dello Swat* has been replaced by a more detailed one reproduced at the beginning of the volume.

In *Travels of Tibetan Pilgrims* we kept the Romanization of Tibetan terms that Tucci used and made changes according to the errata published by Tucci himself at the foot of the 1940 edition. Footnotes and references are maintained in their original forms, with clarifications between square brackets wherever absolutely necessary. Where Tucci closed a paragraph with a set of dots indicating an ellipsis (..., ..., etc.), we decided to close the sentence with [...]. All the references, whatever the abbreviated form chosen by Tucci, can be easily found in the References at the end of the volume. Chronological references have been updated to current standards (e.g., B.C. → BCE, A.D. → CE; XI, XIst → 11th). Classic sources follow the indications of Oxford Dictionary of Classics.

Arrian, *An.* → Arr. *Anab.* = Arrian *Anabasis*

Curtius Rufus, *Hist.* → Curt. = Curtius Rufus, *Historiae Alexandri Magni*

Nat. Hist. → Plin. *HN* = Plinius, *Naturalis Historia*

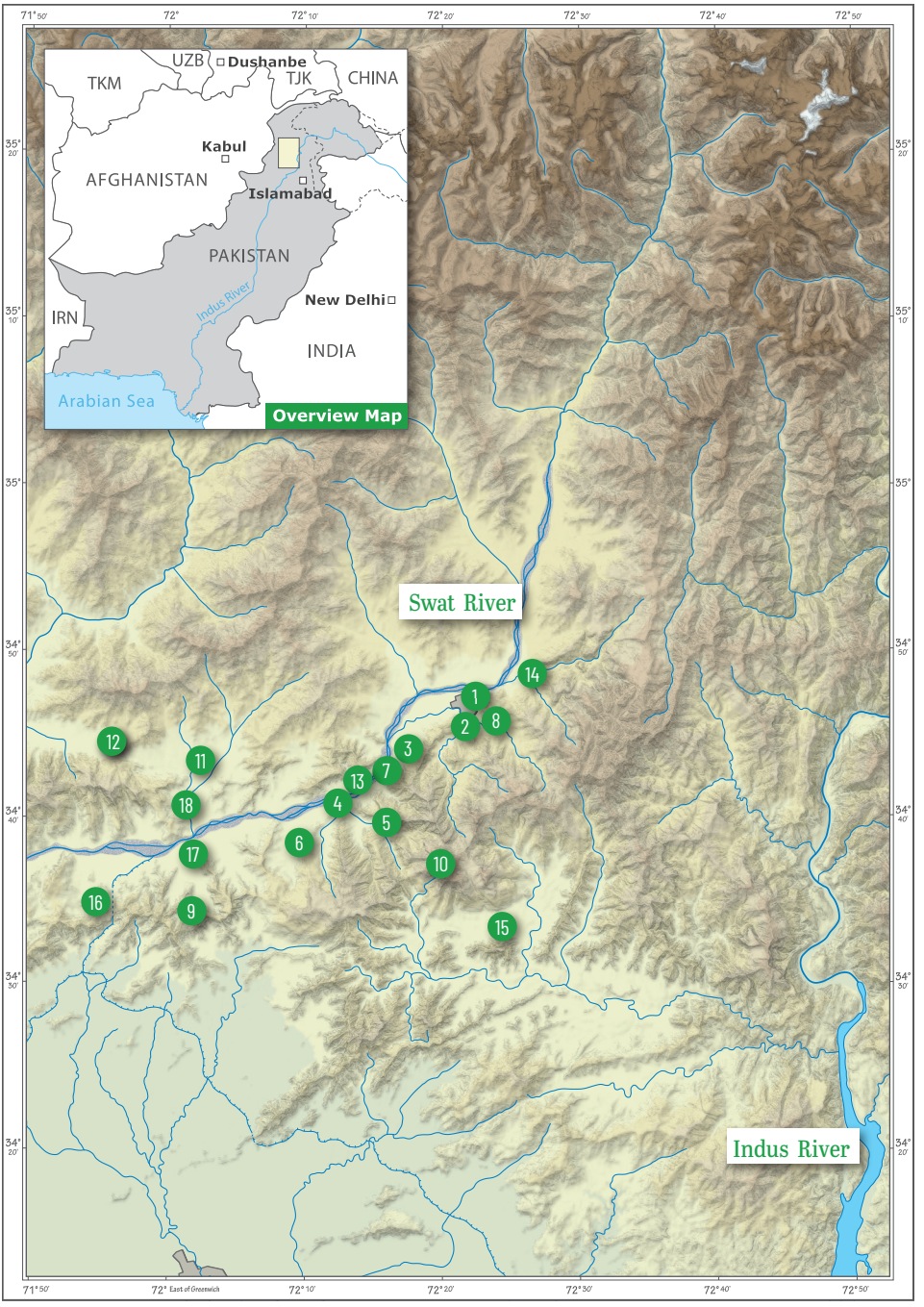
Strabo → Strabo, *Geographika*

In appended texts and additional notes, wherever possible, diacritics are omitted.

Swāt Valley Map

1. Butkara
2. Saidu Sharif
3. Udegram
4. Barikot
5. Amluk-dara
6. Gumbat
7. Gogdara
8. Jambil Valley
9. Zalam-kot
10. Mt Ilam
11. Talash valley
12. Dir district
13. Manyar
14. Manglawar
15. Buner district
16. Malakand
17. Batkhela
18. Chakdara

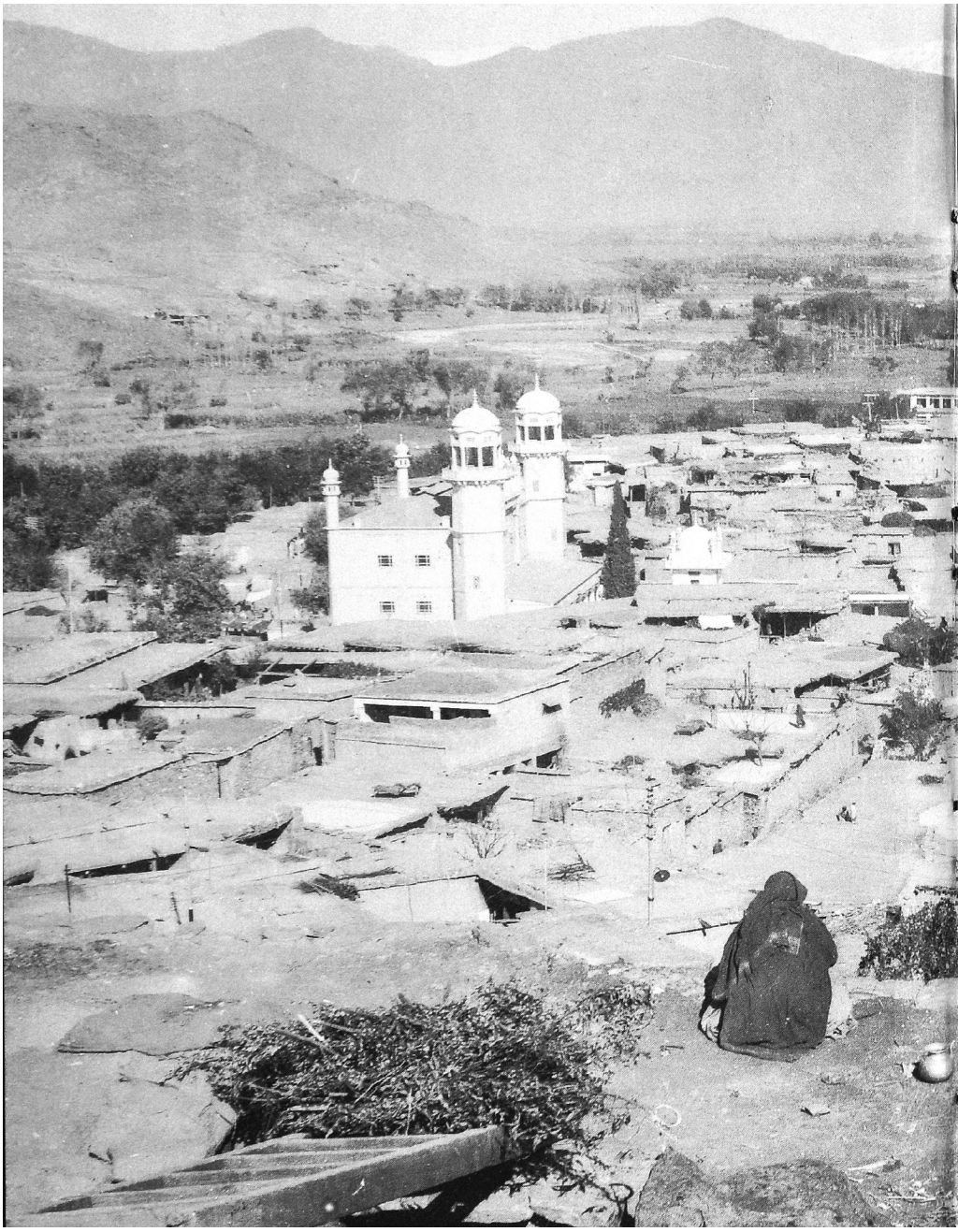
Map by K. Kriz and D. Nell, elaborated by L.M. Olivieri (University of Vienna/ISMEO)


71° 50'
72°
72° 10'
72° 20'
72° 30'
72° 40'
72° 50'
UZB
Dushanbe
TKM
TJK
CHINA
Kabul
AFGHANISTAN
Islamabad
PAKISTAN
Indus River
New Delhi
IRN
INDIA
Arabian Sea
Overview Map
Swat River
Indus River
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
35° 20'
35° 10'
35°
34° 50'
34° 40'
34° 30'
34° 20'
72° East of Greenwich

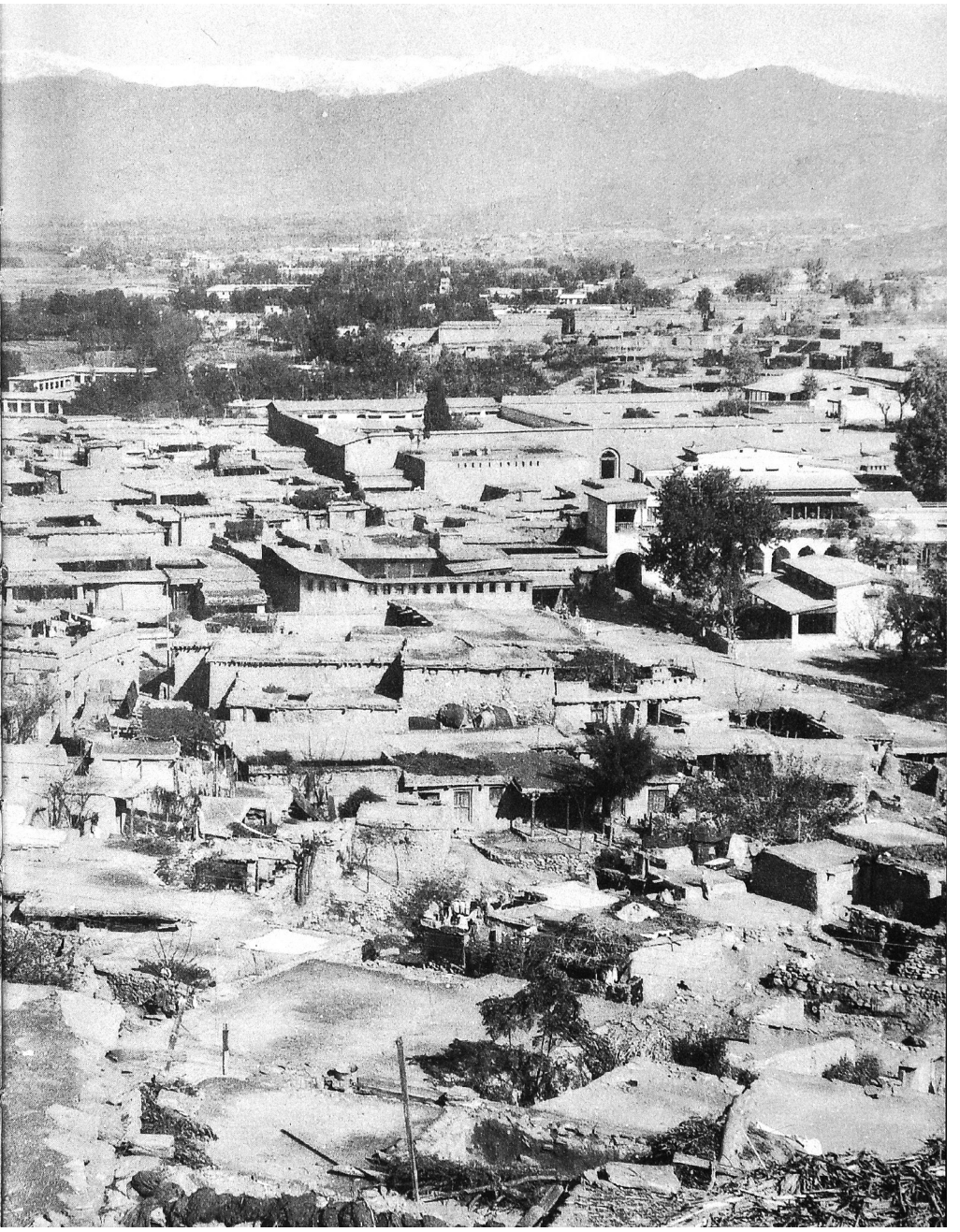
Illustrations (1)

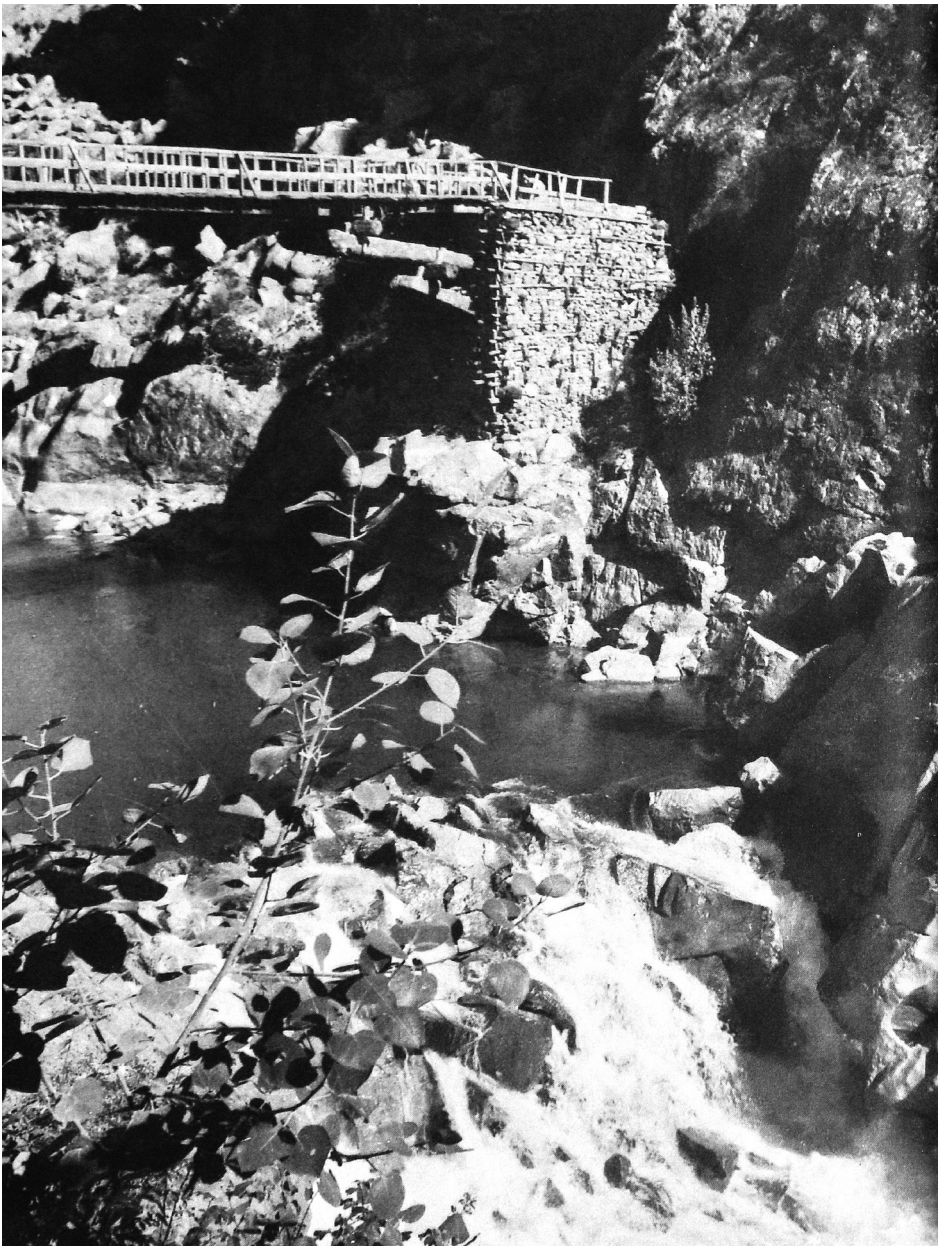
Photo by F. Bonardi, drawings by V. Caroli

1.1 The summer residence of Badshah Shahzda of Swāt in the enchanting solitude of Murgazar, close to the foot of Mt Ilam.



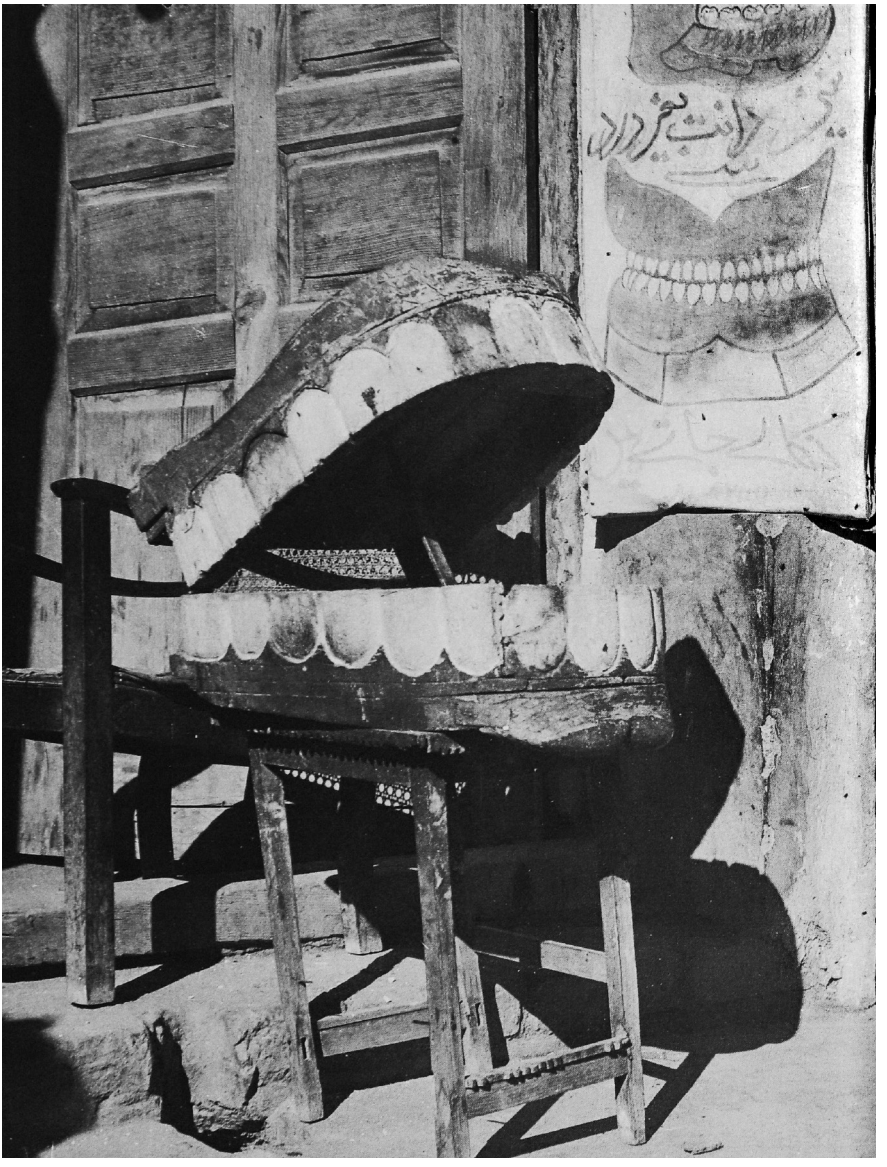
1.2 At the turn of the road the view embraces the whole of Swāt:
the capital Saidu Sharif just a step away, Mingora's big bazar right across,
and beyond the mountain ensemble dominated by Mt Mankyal.



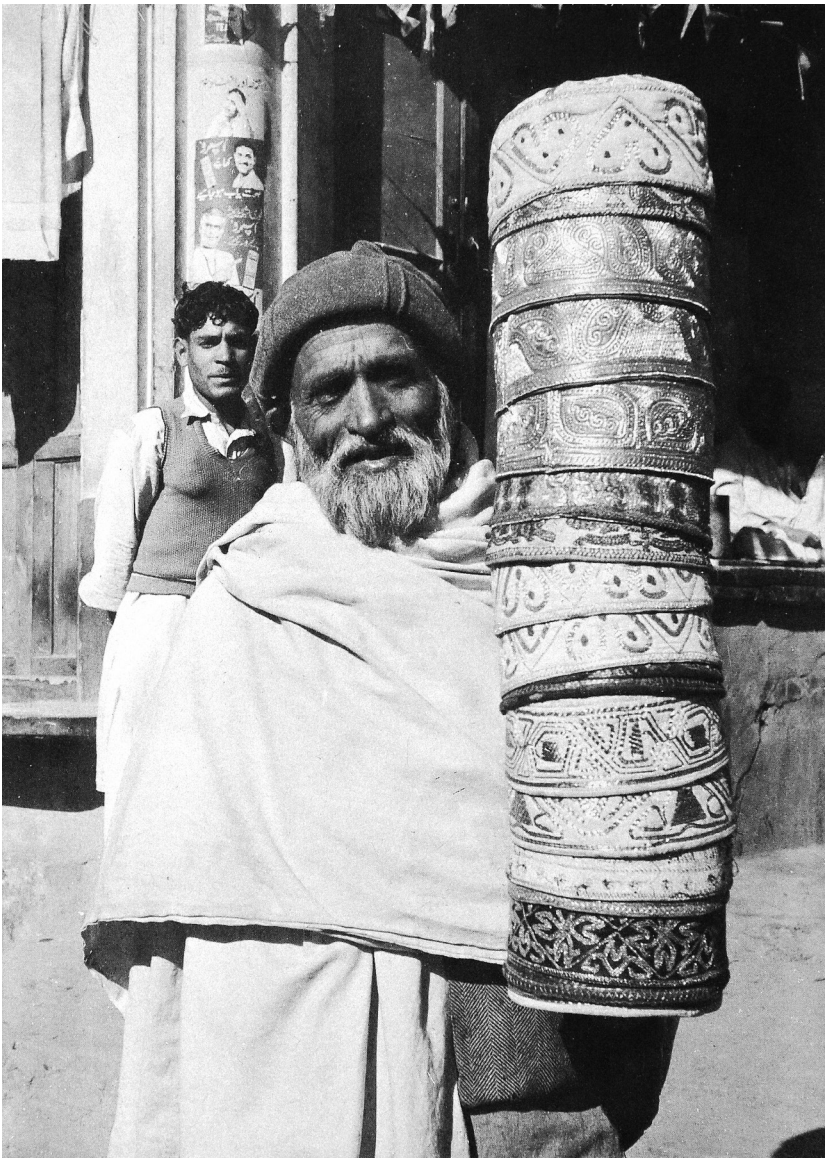


1.3 In the Bahrain gorge, pressed too long amid oppressing rocks, the Swāt River forcefully breaks open with high splashes and runs to rest in the awaiting plain.

1.4 Floating rafts on inflated buffalo skins rise or sit still depending on the river's whims.



1.5 An old display of a dental clinic has made way to more modern but less convincing ads.

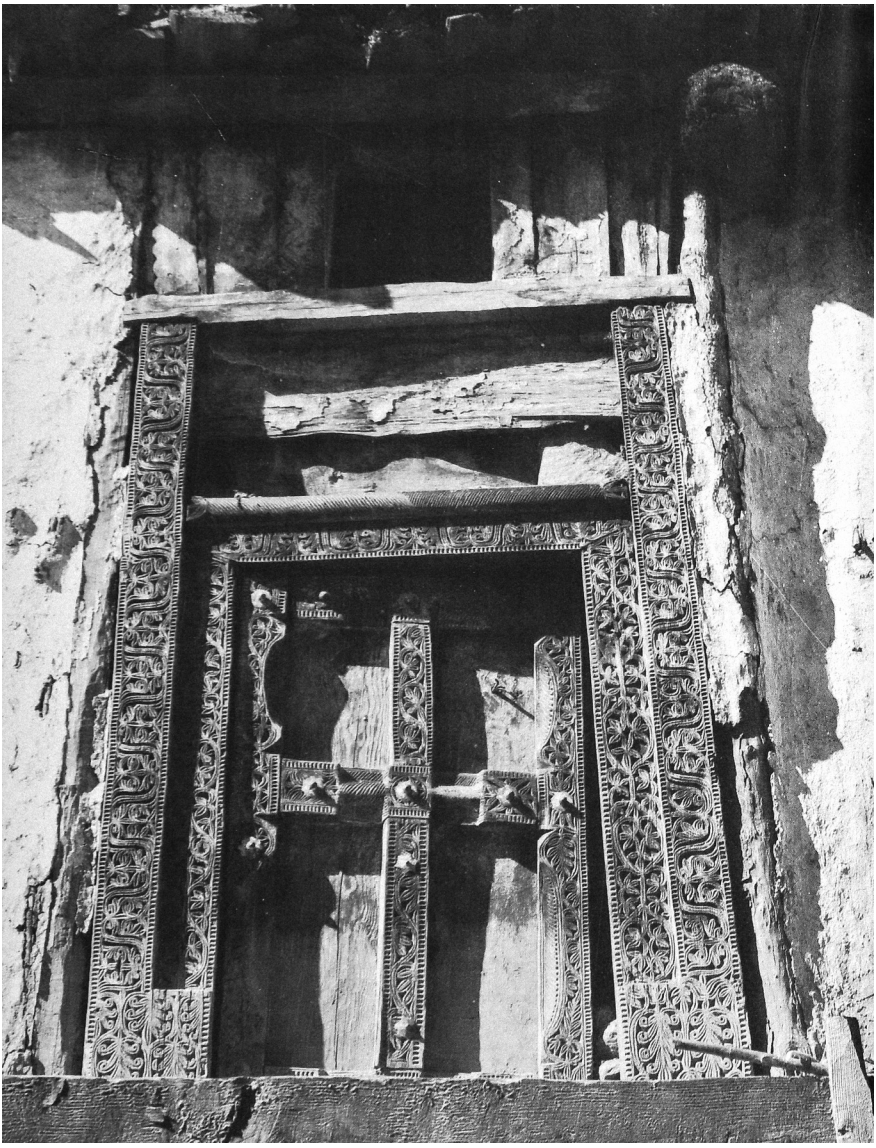


1.6 The salesman, balancing his golden embroidered hats, spends his days at the bazar; he shows them silently, solemnly and with some reserve.

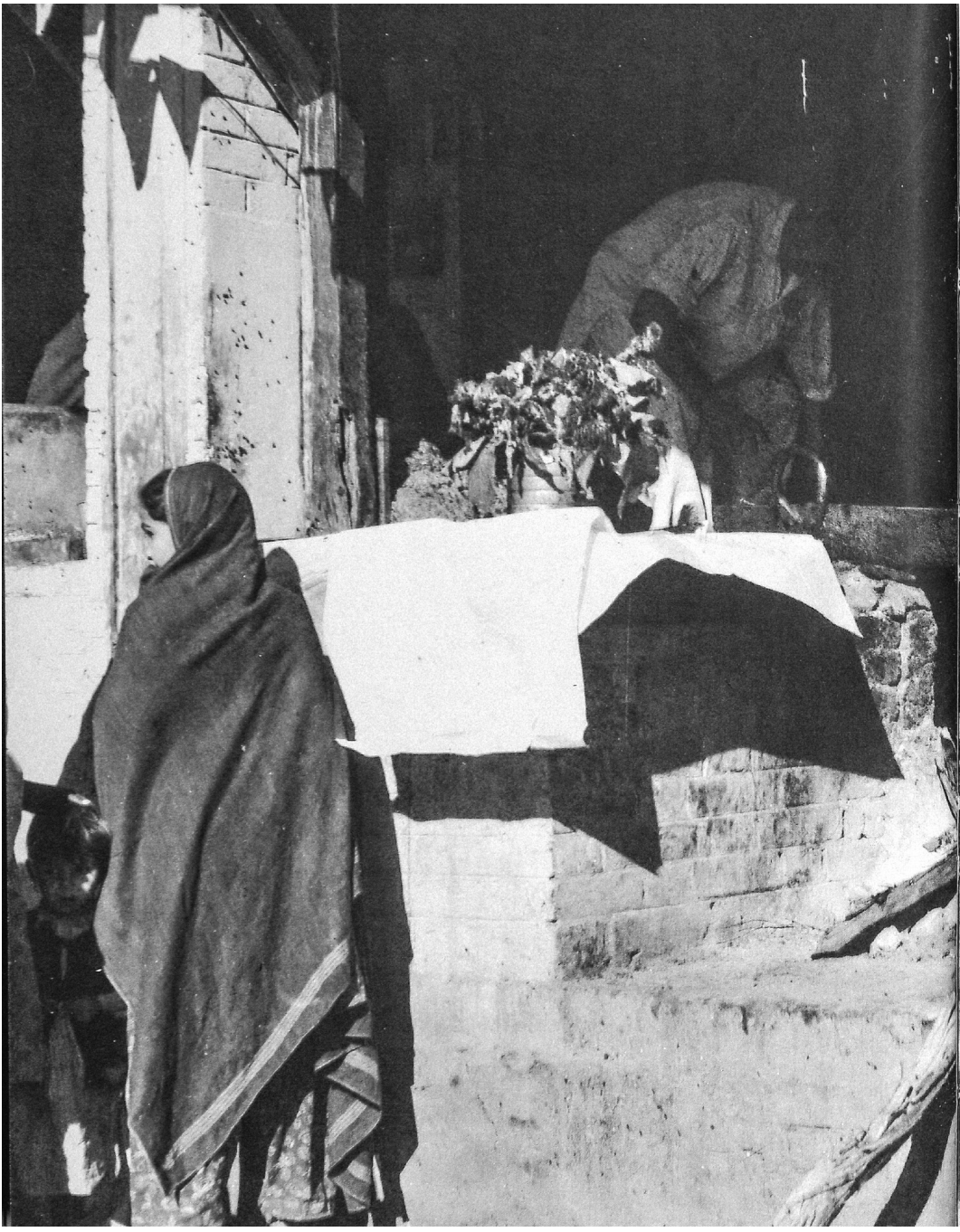
1.7 Fruits, placed skillfully in matching colors, represent a joyful expression of the country's abundant crops.

1.8 The sons of a rich businessman wearing holiday clothes.

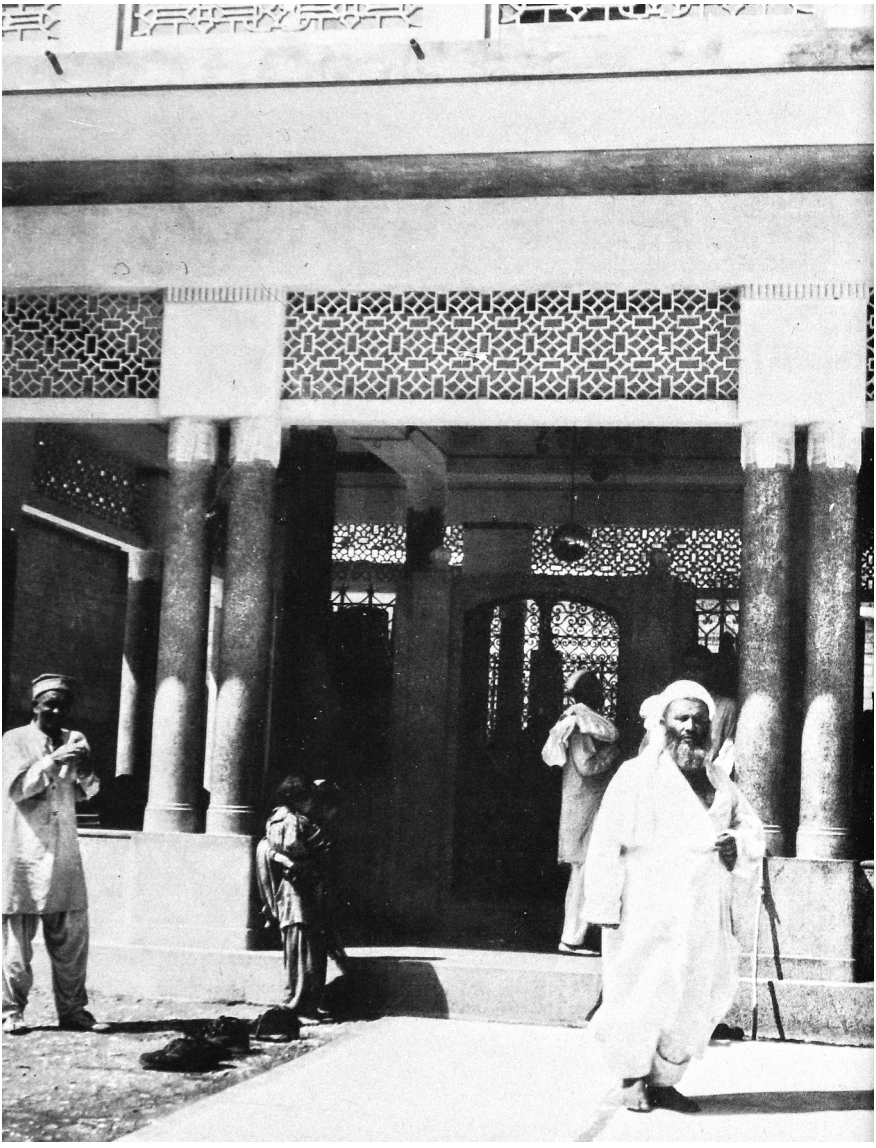
1.9 Light pink clay flasks lay in the sun
or hang on walls like grapes.



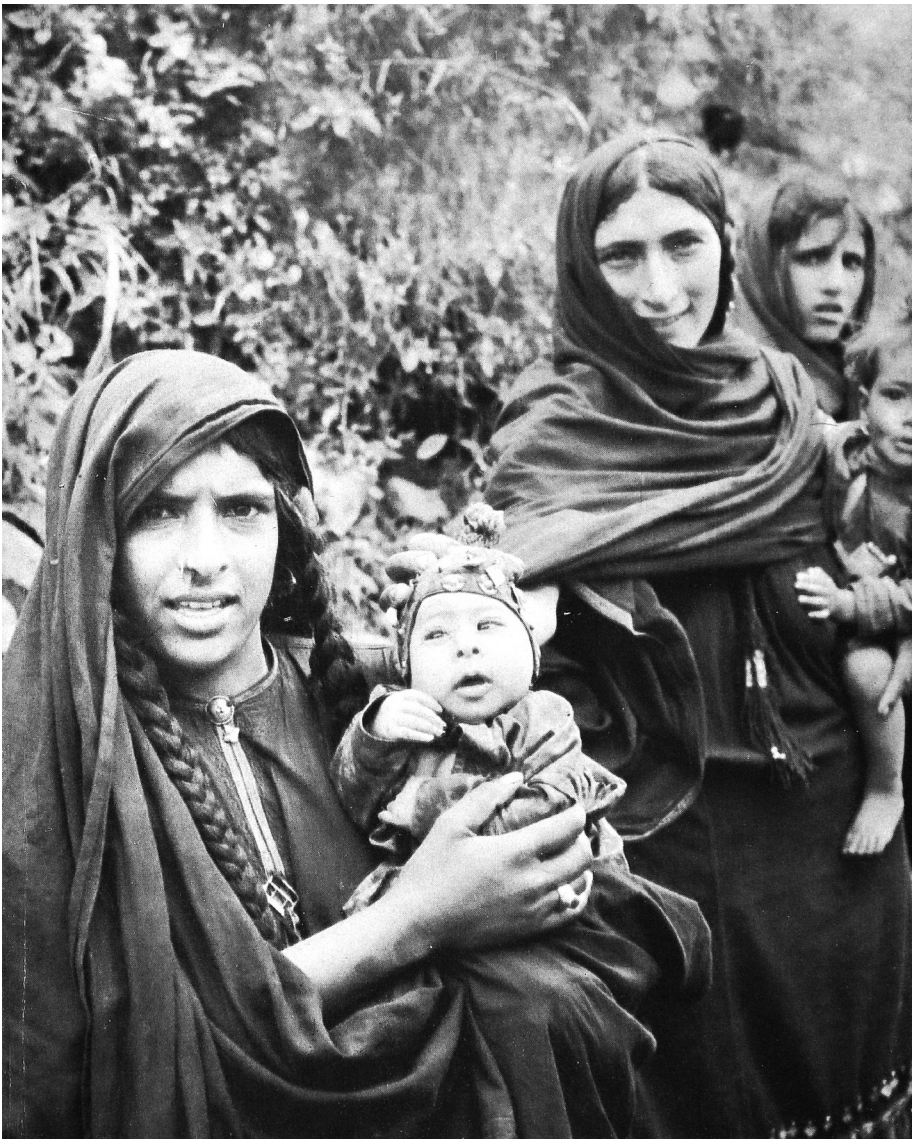
1.10 Modern craftsmen preserve and pass on the ancient skill of woodworking.



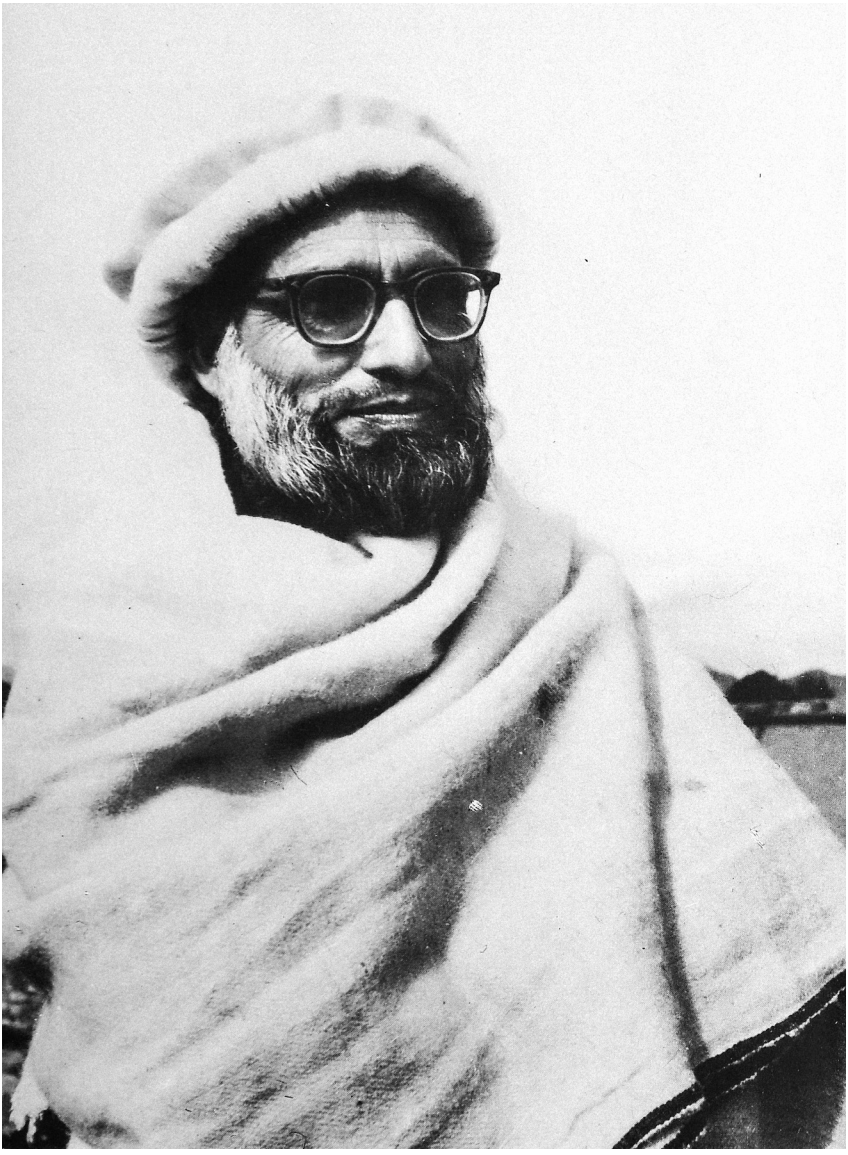
1.11 A man working at his rotisserie keeps a close eye on the frying dough cackes in a meter wide pan.



1.12 In the downtown marble mosque of Saidu Sharif, Wali's ancestor, the Akhund, lies in a simpl ark.



1.13 Gujiar women's maternal love seems to become even more protective in the slow daily errands.



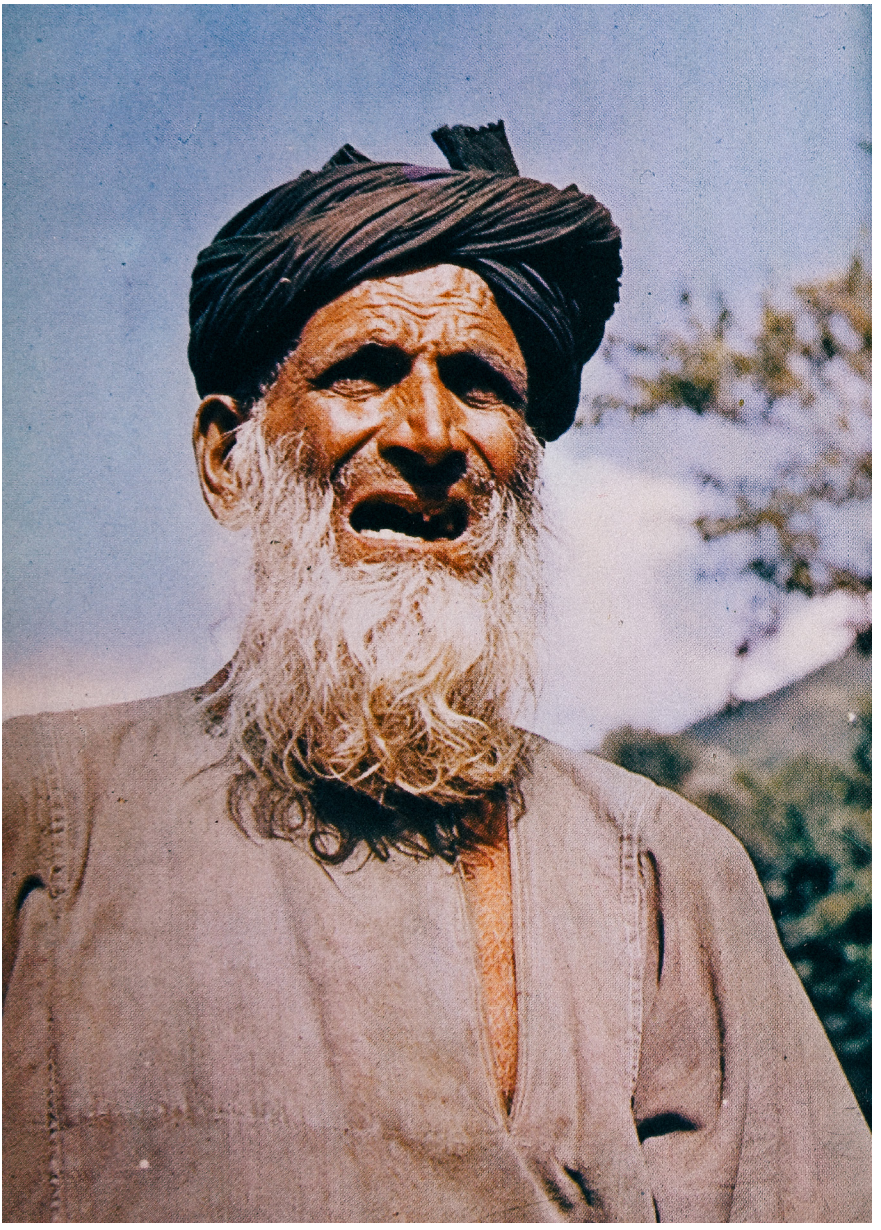
1.14 Swāt people and visitor alike show off in their typical white woolen caps.

1.15 Women at the spring

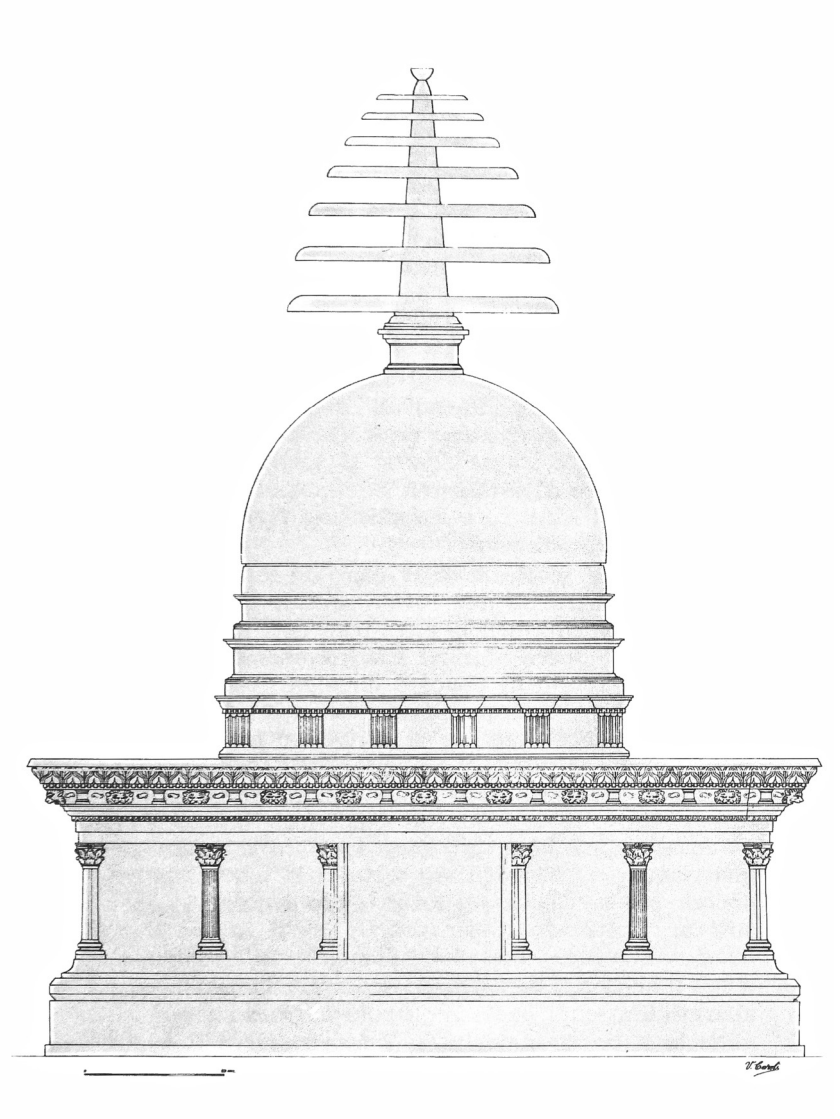
1.16 The bread is baked

1.17 Selling spices

1.18 Profound recollection

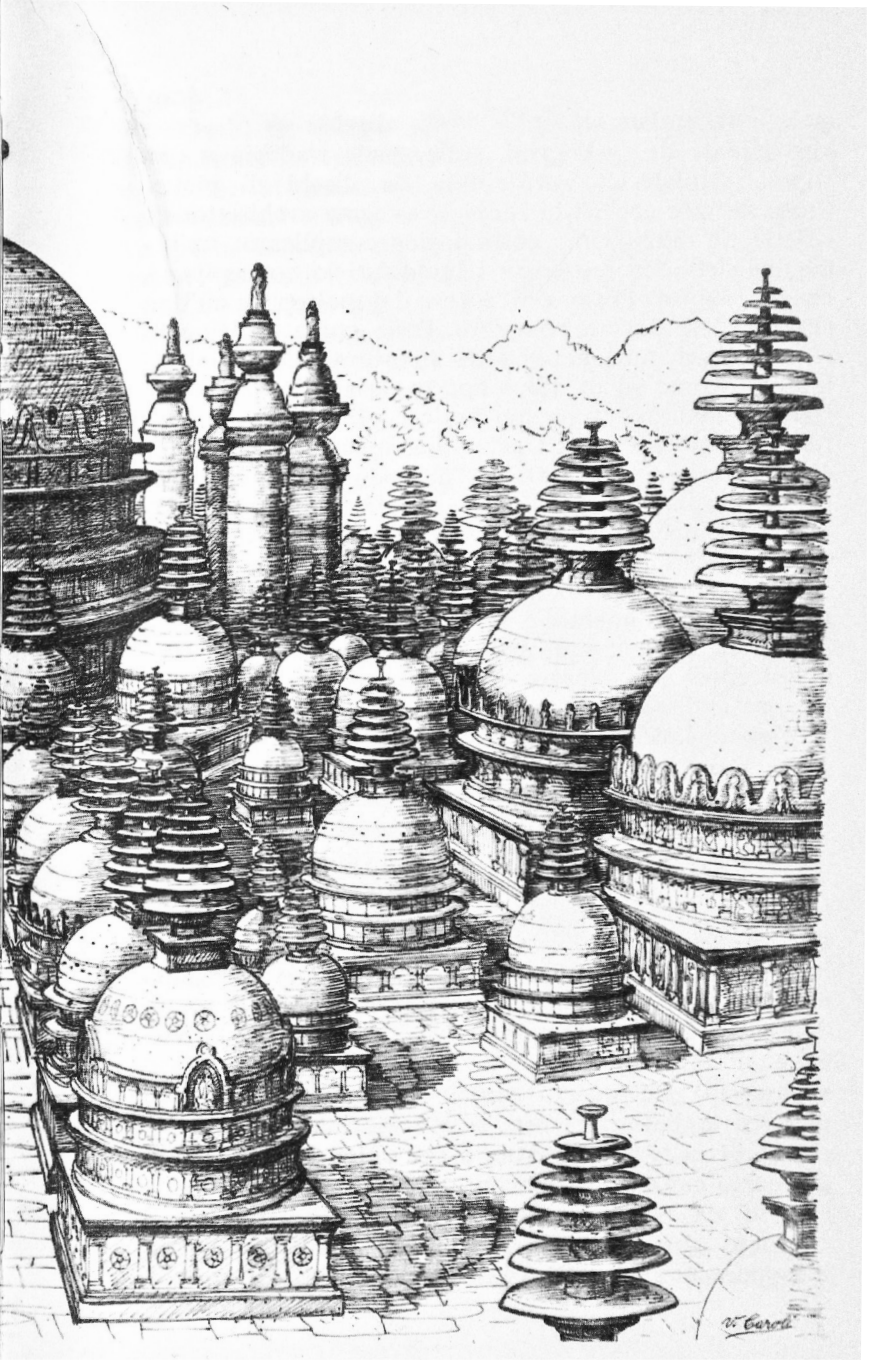


1.19 The elderly landlord of Jare



1.20 Reconstruction drawing by Professor Caroli of what stupa 14 at Butkara I might have been like.

1.21 The Buddhist sacred area of Butkara I as it might have been. Reconstruction drawing by Prof. Caroli.

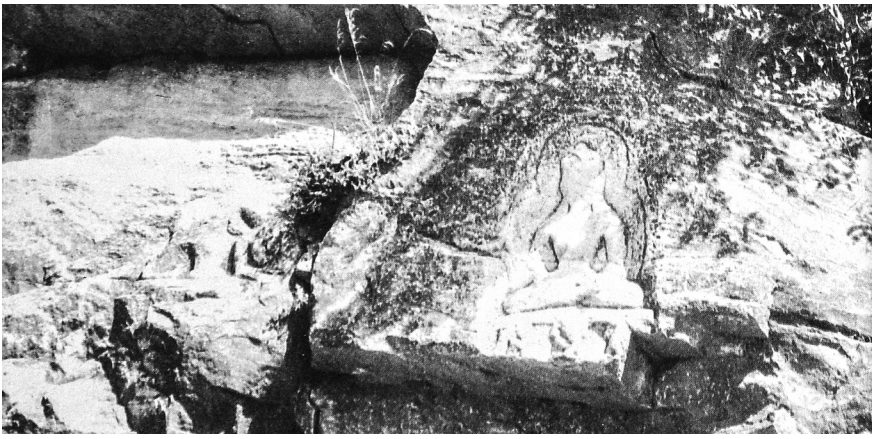


1.22 Abandoned chapel with no remaining statues,
but useful to shepherds as a shelter [Gumbat; see Fig. 2.6].

1.23 Avalokiteshvara, the bodhisattva of compassion, holding a lotus flower in the left hand; still there protecting abandoned paths.

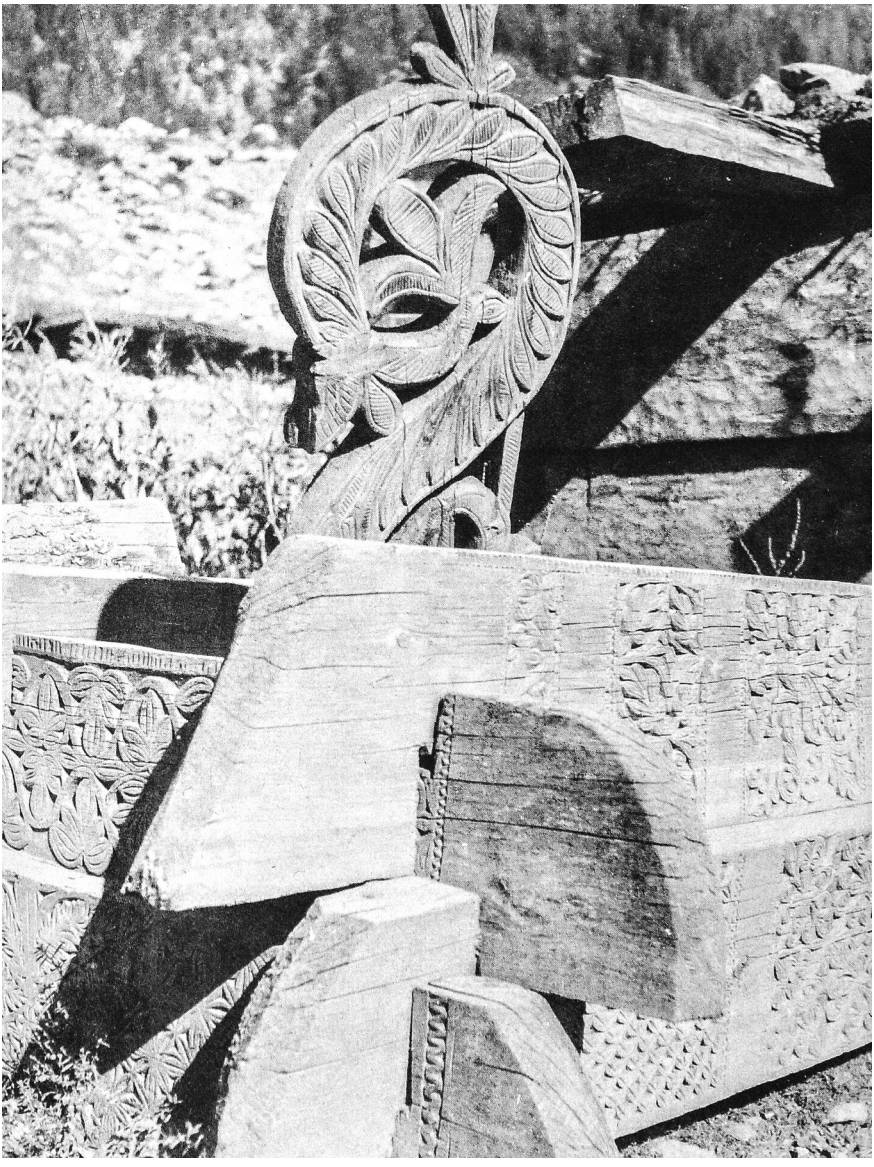
1.24 Tirat, upper Swāt, was the most visited place by pilgrims who wished to render homage to the footprints supposedly left there on the rock by Buddha. The Kharosthi inscription reads: "These are the footprints of Buddha." [now at the Swat Museum].

1.25 From the hight of a cliff, the gigantic image of Buddha looks down on a collapsed and buried monastery. [above the Shaḳhorai or Jahanabad Buddha; see Fig. 2.37]

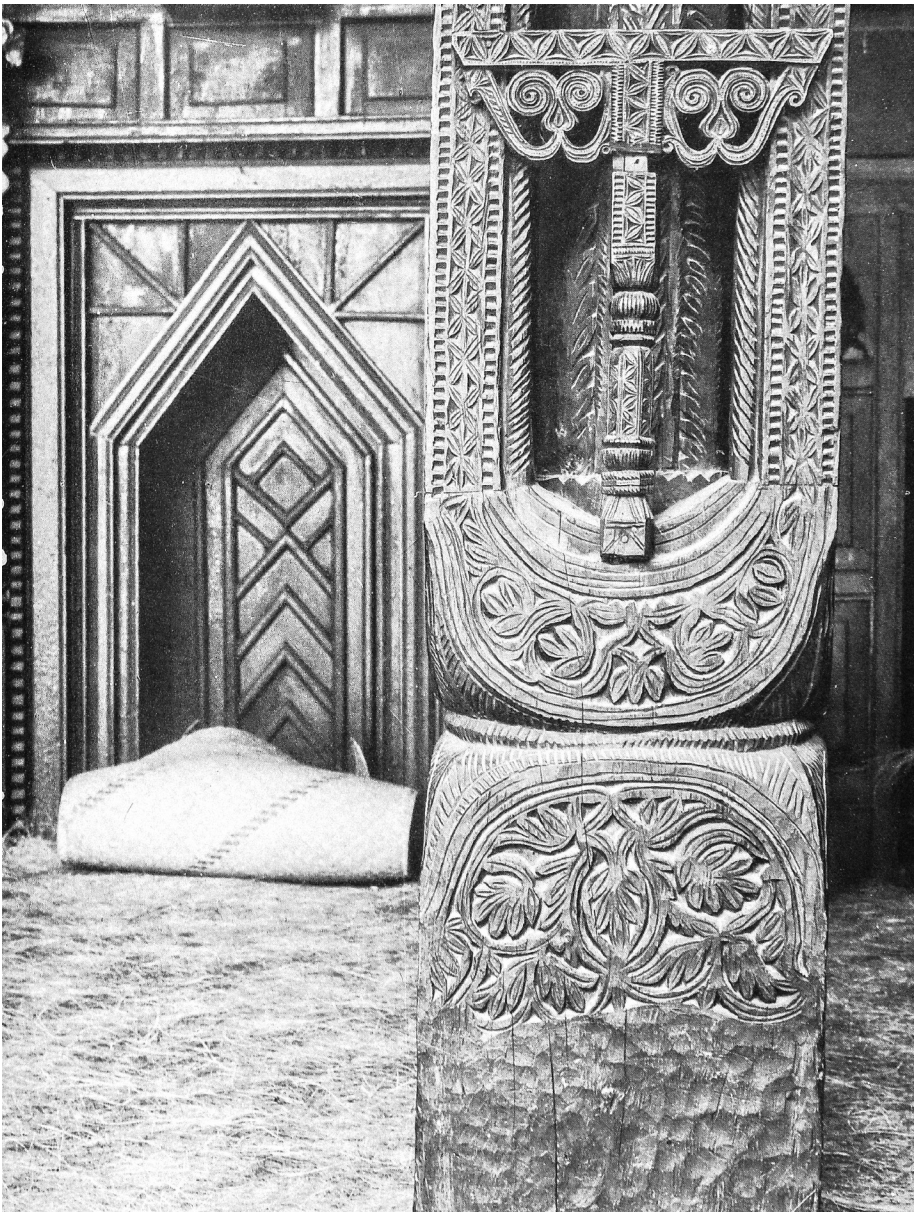


1.26 Survived images along the path pilgrims walked

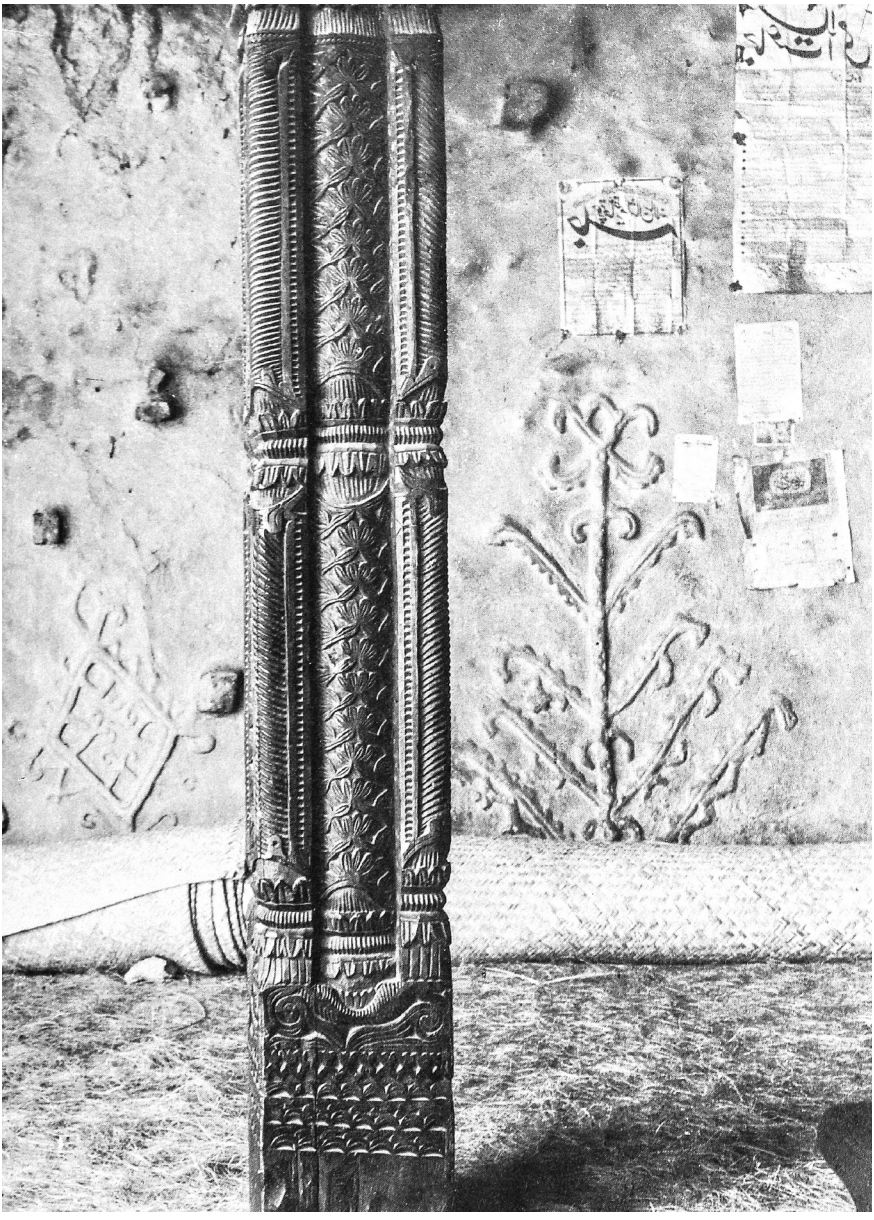
1.27 In the courtyard of Bahrain's mosque, the tomb of a saint who didn't want to abandon the sacred place not even after death, endures the elements.



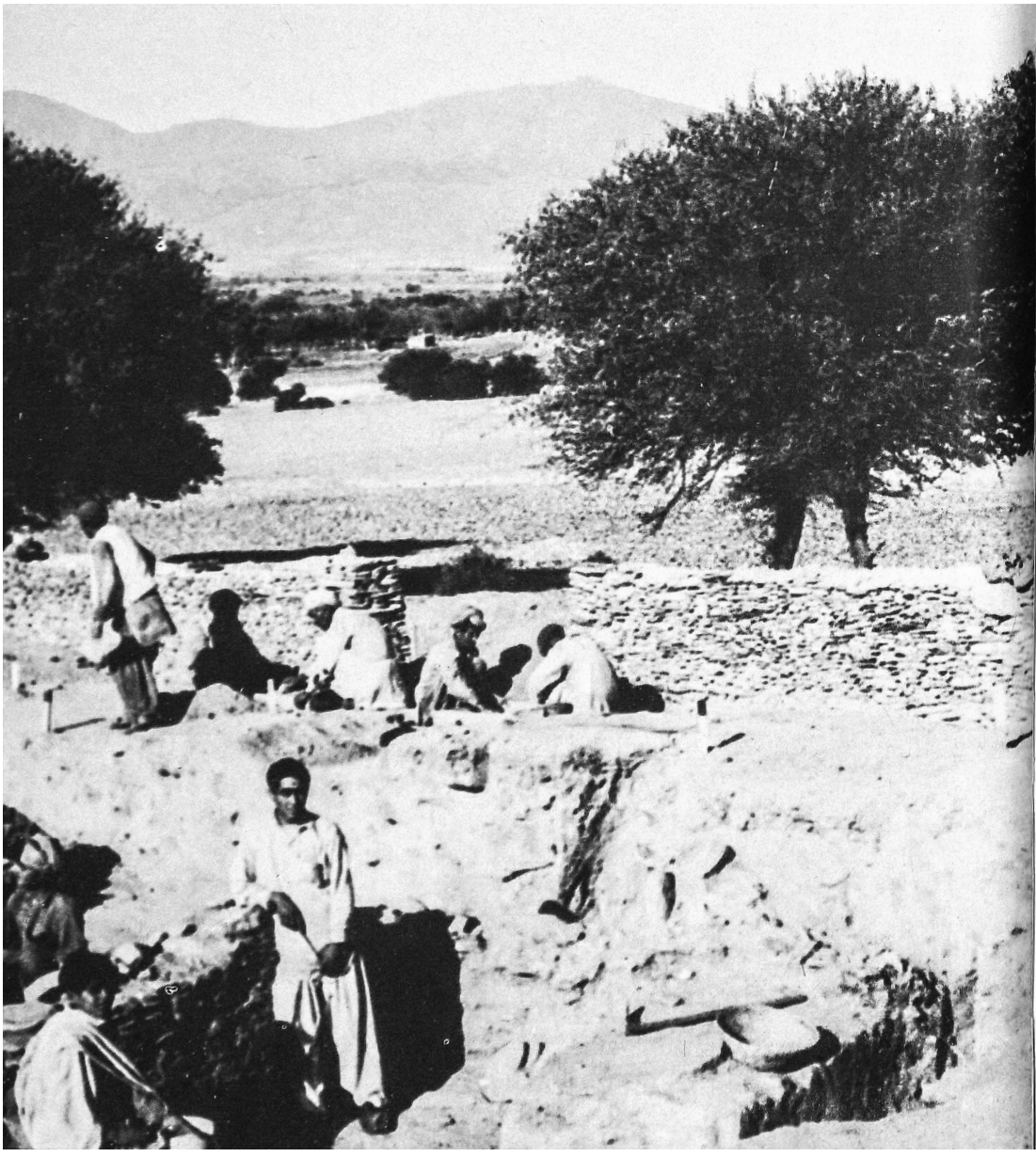
1.28 Kalam's tombs show a variety of drawings and decorative motifs that are quite different from the geometric rigidity used in the cemeteries in lower Swāt.

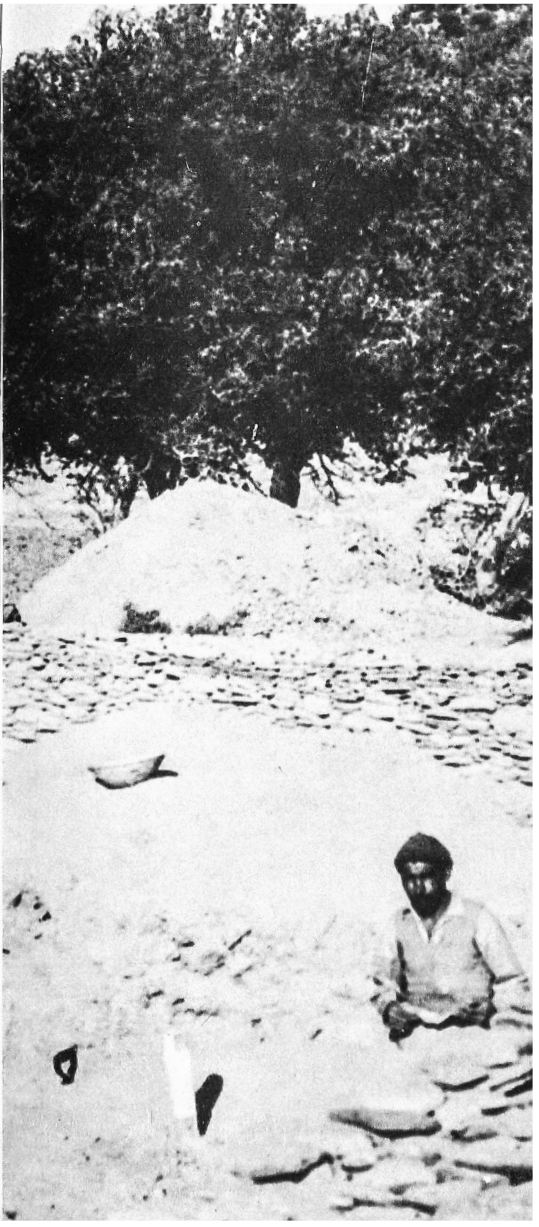


1.29 The frame of a mihrab in Bahrain

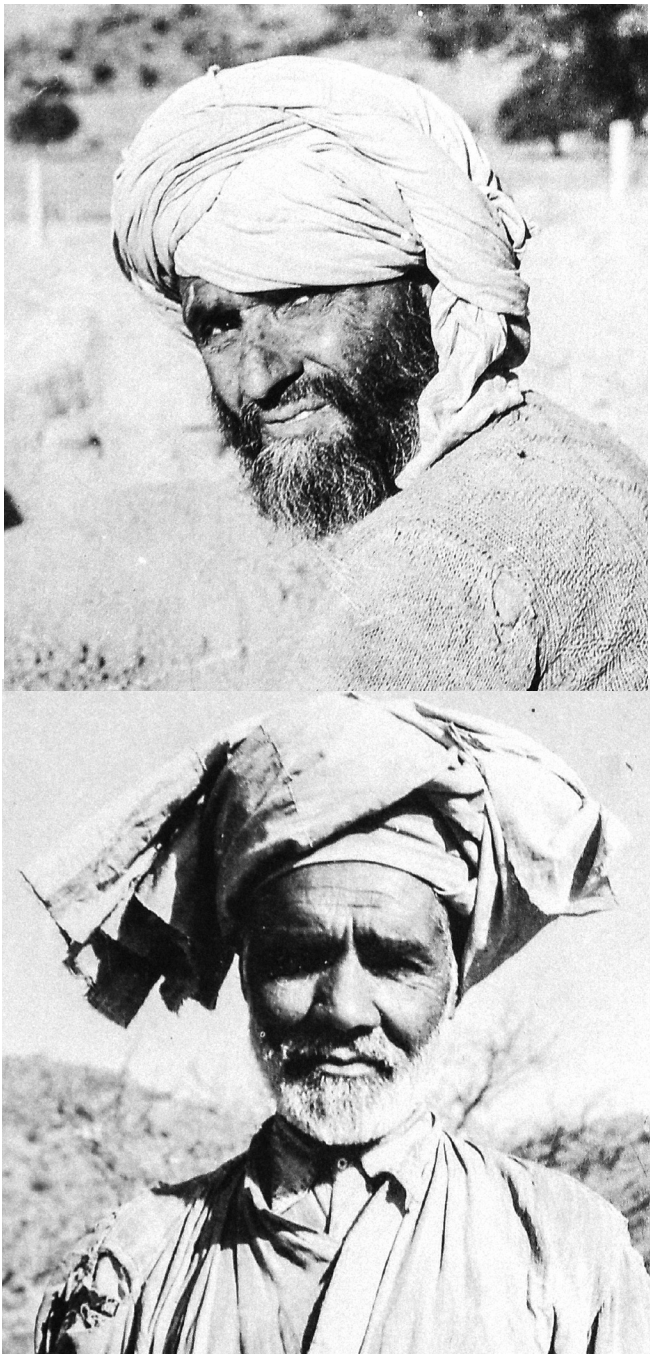


1.30 The wooden decorations in Bahrain's summer mosque mix geometric designs and complex arabesque patterns.

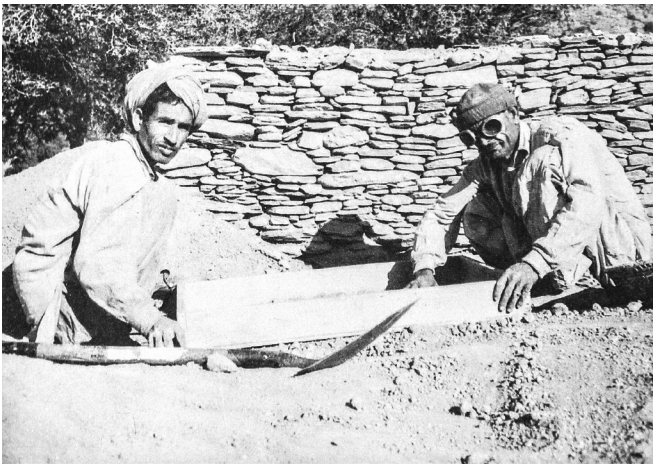




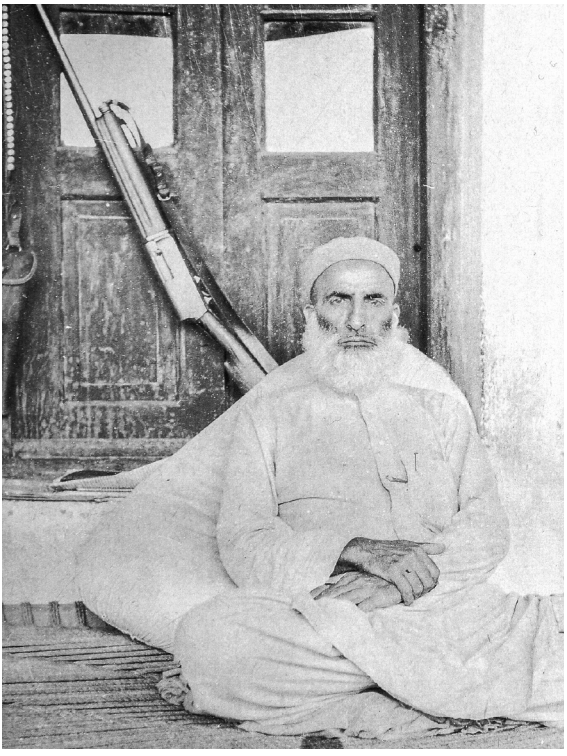
1.31 A wide trench reveals life's different historical periods in Udegram.



1.32 Some of our workers



1.33 “Pippo” uses sunglasses to protect his remaining good eye from the dust as he sifts the dirt dug up from the excavation done to make sure that no coins or other small items were left behind. Most coins have been retrieved using this method.



1.34 The porch of a khan’s mansion: in the midst of mere simplicity, the most modern arms are very visible and ready to be used.

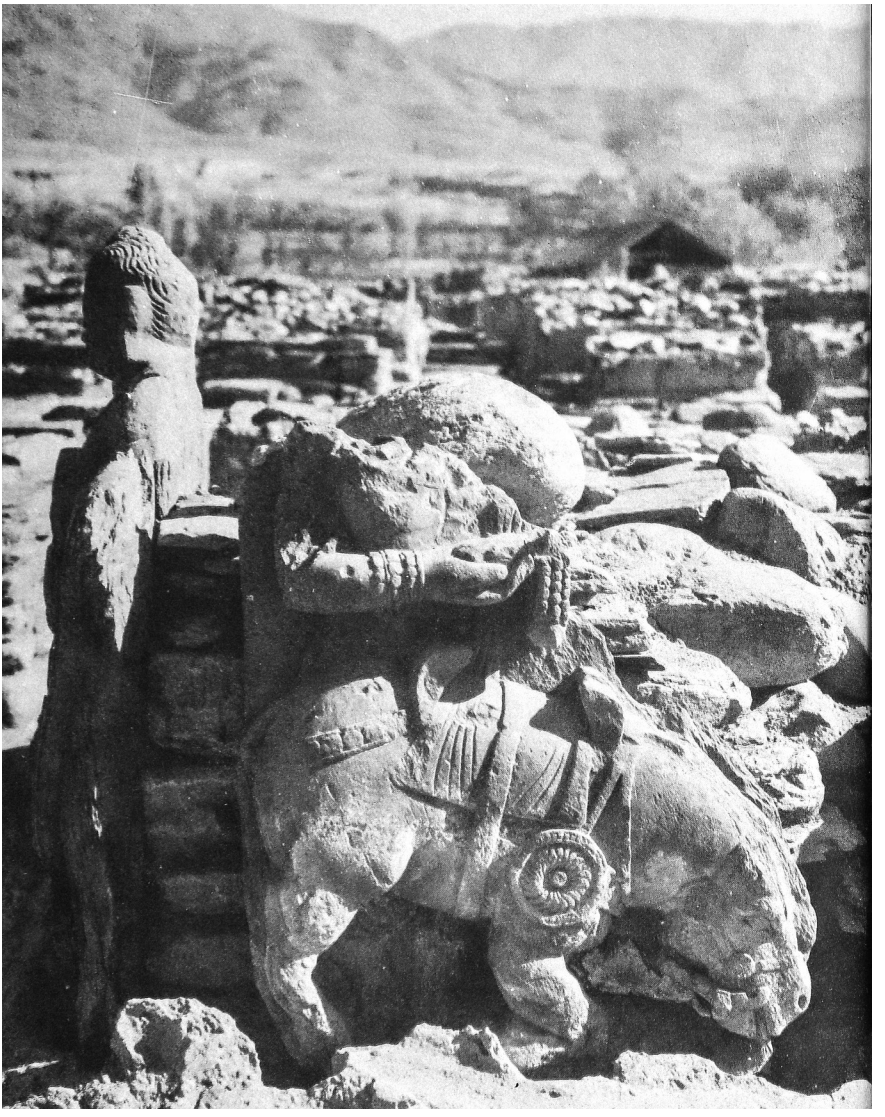
1.35 The police officer archeologist

1.36 Here is a stupa that has been respected by people; the dome rises on the base while the chatras have fallen to the ground. Fragments of carved schist that covered the outer walls lay all around.

1.37 Spring

1.38 Three generations

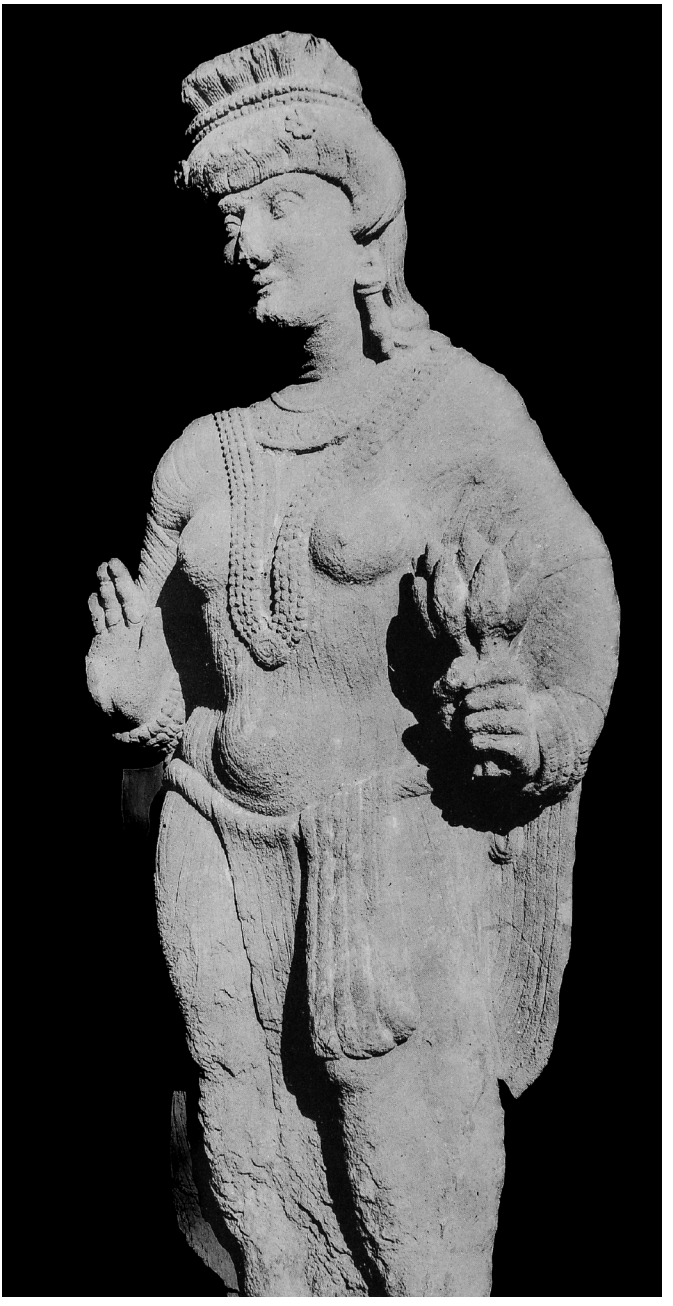
1.39 Gujiar women at an outdoor rest area



1.40 Many sculptures that had been reused as construction material after the tremendous destruction that swept over the sacred area of Butkara I and its monuments, have been left there to document the different phases that architecture went through.

1.41 Fragments of sculptures gathered after buildings collapsed, were reused in the construction of new stupas or to consolidate old ones.

1.42 Buddha's father asks an ascetic to seek a wife for his son

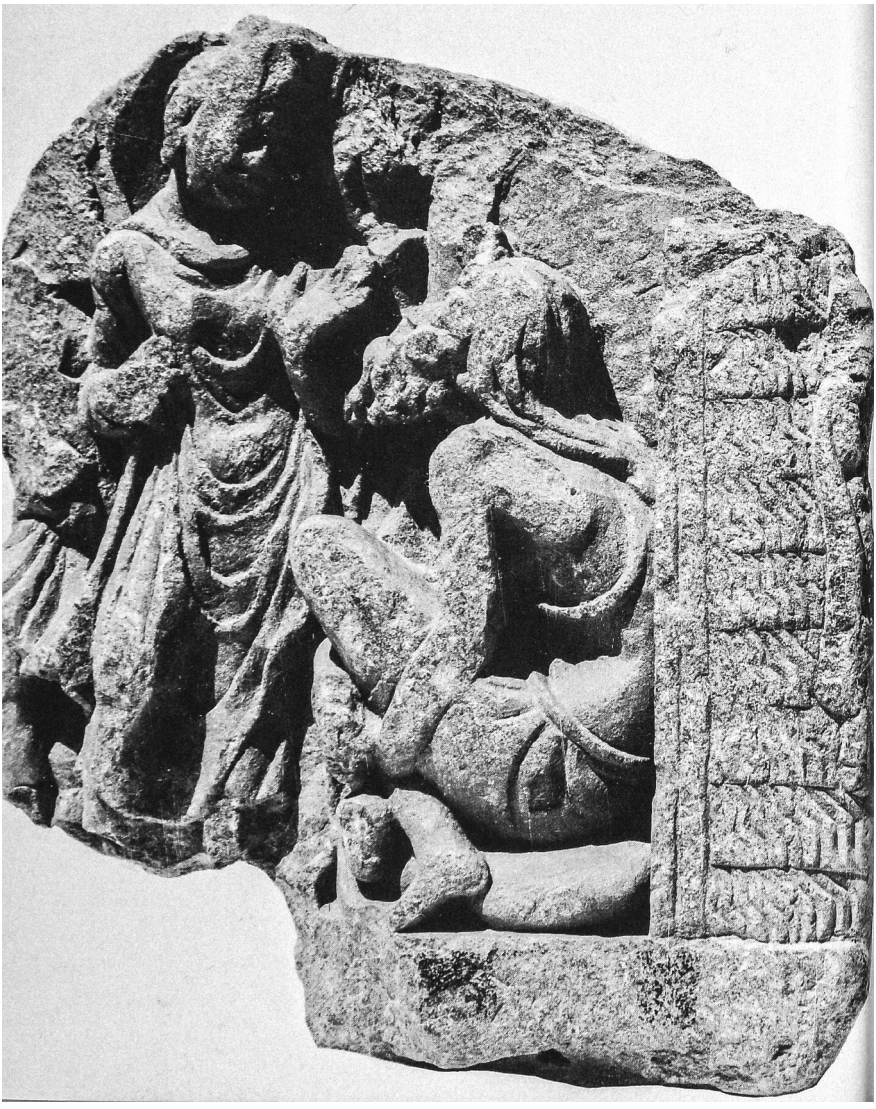


1.43 The statue immortalizes the appearance and the piety of a princess or queen

1.44 The excavation of the sacred area of Butkara I extends over a very large area; the stupas are all next to each other and even after they collapsed, they still witness the generous piety of donors.

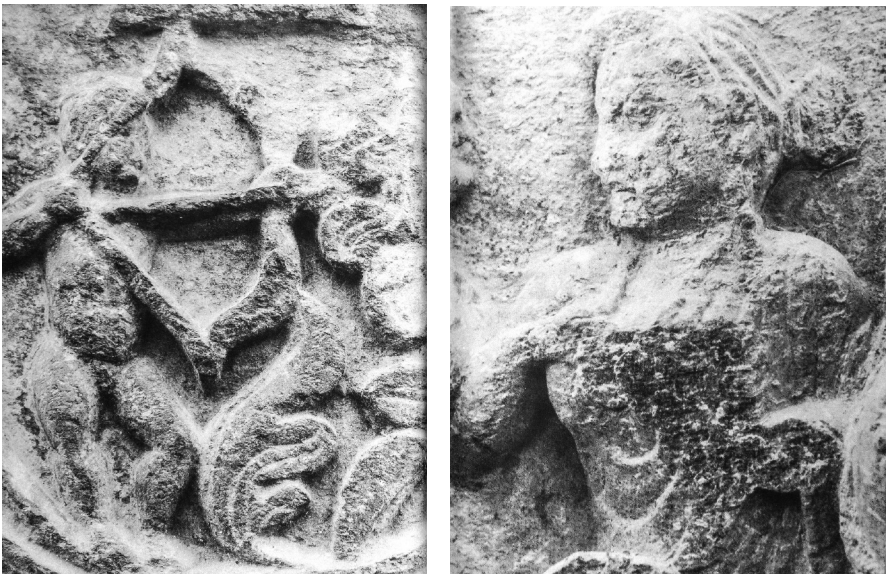
1.45 Yashodhara, the future spouse, is introduced to Buddha before the wedding

1.46 The image of Atlas reaches the shores of the Indus River



1.47 Once Buddha had left the Palace and dedicated himself to the ascetic life, he fails to find masters capable to teach him the way to quench suffering.

1.48 The sinuous and firm shapes show the influence of Indian art



1.49 The image of Eros drawing the bow
and another example of Classical influence

1.50 At times artists used caricatures instead of portaits, like this Brahmin with large ears.

1.51 Fragment of a standing Buddha.

1.52 Images of donors are a display of the rich variety of ethnic groups present in Swāt.

1.53 A statue representing an offerer, possibly Central Asian.

1.54 A Huna coin

Part 1

1.1 Travels of Tibetan Pilgrims in the Swāt Valley[1]

Giuseppe Tucci

Introduction

It is now accepted by all scholars that Uḍḍiyāna[2] must be located in the Swāt Valley: in fact I think that the view of my friend Benoytosh Bhattacharyya[3] who still identifies Uḍḍiyāna with the western part of Assam has but few supporters. But it must be admitted that our knowledge of the country in Buddhist times is very scanty; our only informants are in fact the Chinese pilgrims, but the description which they have left of the place is not very much detailed.[4]

It was left to Sir Aurel Stein to identify, in the course of his adventurous travels in the Swāt Valley, the various places referred to by the Chinese pilgrims and to describe in a fascinating book[5] the remains which have escaped destruction. The systematical exploration of this region is likely to contribute greatly to our knowledge of Buddhism and Oriental history. In fact, modern researches point to the great importance of the Swāt

1 [This text was published with the same title in book format by the Greater India Society, Calcutta, 1940. Part IV of the original text, an appendix with the Romanized Tibetan texts, has not been included.]

2 S. Levi, *Le catalogue des Yakṣas dans la Mahāmāyūri, Journal Asiatique,* 1915, p. 19 ff.

3 B. Bhattacharyya, *The Indian Buddhist Iconography*, p. xxxii and B. Bhattacharyya, *An introduction to Buddhist Esoterism*, p. 45. But cf. P.C. Bagchi in *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. VI, p. 580 ff.

4 Fa-hsien, *A record of Buddhistic Kingdoms*, J. Legge trans. 1886, p. 28; Yuan Chwang, (Hiouen-Thsang) [Xuanzang], *Memories* (Julien), I, p. 131 ff.; E. Chavannes, *Documents sur les Tou-Kine occidentaux*, p. 128, *Sung Yun* in E. Chavannes, Voyage de Song Yun dans l'Udyiāna et le Gandhāra (518-522 a.C.), *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, 1903, p. 379 [see Beal 1869, 1884, Chavannes 1903, Watters 1904].

5 M.A. Stein, *On Alexander's Track to the Indus*, London, 1929.

Valley; not only was it very near to the commercial routes linking India with Central Asia but it was considered[6] as the birthplace of many rites and practices later on absorbed into Mahāyāna. There are many Tantras which were commonly acknowledged as having been first revealed in Uḍḍiyāna. One of the most esoteric methods of Tāntric realisations relating chiefly to the cycle of the ḍākinī was even known as the Uḍḍiyānakrama; the connection of the country with magic is alluded to in some Tāntric manuals which even today enjoy great popularity.

It is therefore desirable to have some better and more detailed information about a country to which our researches point as one of the most active centres of radiation of Hindu esoterism.

During my travels in western Tibet I was fortunate enough to find two texts which are a kind of itinerary of the Swāt Valley. We easily understand why this place became so famous as a kind of magic-land for many Tibetan pilgrims when we remember that it was considered to have been the birth-place of Padmasabhava. There are, in fact, besides India proper, other countries which greatly influenced the mystic literature of Tibet; when the intercourse with them became rare or came to an end for political reasons, those countries were transformed into a fairyland of which the geographical and historical reality faded and decayed; one of them, is Śambhala and the other Orgyan, *viz*., Uḍḍiyāna.

The various mystic revelations connected with the two countries were respectively accepted by two different schools; Orgyan, the country of Padmasanlbhava, and the place of the fairies (ḍākinī) became the holy land for the rÑiṅ ma pa, and, later on for the bKa' rgyud pa (specially for the sub-sects ḥBrug pa and Kar ma pa); Śambhala was, on the other hand, changed into a paradise for the ascetics initiated into the mysteries of Kālacakra still counting many adepts chiefly among the dGe lugs pa, *viz*., the yellow sect. I think that Śambhala became popular in Tibet after Orgyan; that is the reason why we cannot find about it as much information as we can gather as regards Orgyan; nor do I know of any historical itinerary of that country. This seems to point to the fact that the mystic significance of Śambhala developed at a later time, when any real and direct connection with the country had come to an end and the Tibetans had only to rely upon the information to be gathered from the Vimalaprabhā or from the earlier commentators of the Kālacakra Tantra[7].

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6 G. Tucci, 'Some glosses upon the Guhyasamāja', *Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques,* III p. 351; G. Tucci, *Indo-Tibetica,* Vol. III, Part II, p. 79.

7 No great weight can be attached to a fragment published by B. Laufer, [in] 'Zur Buddhistichen Literatur der Uiguren', *T'oung Pao,* 1907, p. 401, which seems to have been influenced by the mythological

Even the information about the country of Śambhala which we gather from the commentary of mK 'as ḥgrub rje contains nothing but mythology.

The only itinerary which has come down to us, *viz.*, the "*Śam bha lai lam yig*"[8] by the famous third Pan c'en bLa ma bLo bzaṅ dpal ldan ye Ses (1740-1780), as I have shown elsewhere, gives the impression of being nothing more than a literary compilation largely based upon mythic and fantastic traditions. From all these facts we can draw the conclusion that the yellow sect composed its guides to Śambhala, *viz.*, to the Kālacakra-paradise which had, in the meantime, become a supreme ideal for most of its followers, in order to possess the counterpart of the holy Orgyan of the rival schools. The country itself was no longer a geographical reality to be exactly located in some part of the world; it was somewhere in the North, but as to where, that was practically a mere hypothesis.

On the other hand we know of many itineraries to Orgyan. One is that of Buddhagupta;[9] it is rather late, but it shows that even as late as the 16th century that part of Asia was still considered as a kind of holy place worth visiting by the few Buddhist adepts still surviving in India, in spite of the dangers which they were likely to meet on account of the risk of the journey itself and of the unfriendliness of the Muslims. According to Buddhagupta the country in his time was known under the name of Ghazni.

But he usually mentions the country under its traditional name, showing that Tibetan Orgyan is derived from Uḍḍiyāna, "on account," he says, "of the similarity of sound between ḍ and r." It must be mentioned in this connection that in Tibetan we are confronted with two forms of this name, some sources giving 'Orgyan' and some others 'Urgyan.' There is no doubt that both go back to a Sanskrit original: it is in fact known that in the Indian texts this country is called both Uḍḍiyāna and Oḍiyiāna. The first seems, anyhow, to be the right one.

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ethnography of Central Asian countries as preserved in the Chinese compilations such as the Sha hai king. According to the Vimalaprabhā Śambhala would have been on the shore of the Sitā river, its chief place being Kalāpa.

8 A. Grünwedel ed. and trans., *Der Weg nach Śambhala. Śam bha lai lam yig-Abhand.* der Königl. Bayerischen Ak. der Wissenschaften, München, 1915.

9 Upon his travels see G. Tucci, 'The sea and land travels of a Buddhist sādhu in the sixteenth century', *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. VII, p. 683. I avail myself of the opportunity which is here offered to me to correct a statement contained in the *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. IX, p. 235. I did not say in that paper that Potalaka is to be searched for in Madagascar, but that according to the tradition referred to by Buddhagupta, there was a time in India when Potala was located by some school in that island and I insisted upon the fact that this localisation shifted from place to place "according to beliefs of the various communities and the spreading of the geographical knowledge."

But there are two older itineraries to the same country and much more detailed: the similarity between some passages of these texts containing the description of the place and the narrative of Buddhagupta leaves me little doubt that Tāranātha had one of them under his eyes when he wrote the account of the travels of his master.

The two itineraries here studied are respectively that of Orgyan pa and that of sTag ts'aṅ ras pa. Orgyan pa means in fact "the man of Orgyan" which implies that his travels were so famous that he was given the name of the miraculous country which he had been able to visit and whence he returned safe back to his fatherland.

He was the most prominent disciple of a *siddha* or *grub t'ob* who still enjoys a great renown all over Tibet, I mean rGod ts'aṅ pa. The study of Tibetan chronology is still at its very beginning and it is therefore very difficult to fix the date of many Tibetan events; but fortunately some chronicles contain a short biography of Orgyan pa with certain chronological data which enable us to fix his age approximately.

The historical work I am referring to is the C'os ḥbyuṅ by Pad ma dkar po, one of the most famous polygraphs of Tibet and the greatest authority among the ḥBrug pa who call him 'ṅag dbaṅ,' the master of the speech.[10]

The inclusion of the biography of Orgyan pa in his chronicle depends on the fact that Orgyan pa belongs to the same *sarnpmdāya, viz*., to the same mystic school as Pad ma dkar po, both being adepts of the ḥBrug pa subsect, which has now its stronghold in Bhutān but is largely spread all over Tibet.

I subjoin the chief contents of the biography written by Pad ma dkar po. "Urgyan pa[11]" was born in Go luṅ in the territory of Zur ts'o. His father was called Jo p'an. His clan was that of rGyus [...].

"At the age of seven he became a catechumen under rGod ts'aṅ pa who had gone to Bhuṭa. 'Then up to the age of sixteen he learned many tantras of the yoga class along with their liturgy such as the Kila, Hevajra and Vajrapāṇi Tantras [...].

"He became famous as a scholar who had no rivals in three branches of learning, *viz*., the explanation, the discussion and the composition; from his elder brother mDo sde dpal he heard the small commentary on the Prajñā. As to the *vinaya,* having looked at this, he found that his inclination

10 The full title being *C'os ḥbyun bstan pai pndma rgyas pai ñin byed*. The biography of Orgyan pa is at p. 181.

11 Pad ma dkar po uses this form instead of the more common Orgyan pa.

towards this branch of learning was favourable; specially by a mere glance at the treatise upon the one hundred and one varities of karman *(ekottarakarmásataka)* he learned it by heart. At the age of twenty he was given various names by his masters, *viz*., that of mK'an po by Rin rtse of Bo doṅ, that of Slob dpon by bSam gliṅ pa of Zaṅ, that of gSaṅ ston by the Ācārya bSod 'od pa, and he fully realized the meaning expressed by these names. He then received the title of Rin c'en dpal.

"He made the vow of studying a single system for twelve years and of avoiding meat; he then perfected himself in the study of the Kālacakra according to the method of ḥGro at the school of Rin rtse of Bo don and according to the method of C'ag at the school of mDo sde dpal of Go luṅ..." Then the biography narrates how he happened to meet rGod ts'aṅ pa, who was able to give him the supreme inspiration of the Kālacakra. "But he discovered also that he had no *karmic* connection with Śambhala but rather with Urgyan, therefore Urgyan pa resolved to start; first of all he remained for nine months in the northern desert and then he went to Ti se, the country of Maryul, Ga śa, Dsa lan dha ra. Then knowing that three of his five companions were not fit for the journey he dismissed them and leading with him dPal yes he went to Urgyan [...].

"There he saw a mountain which is the self-born place of Heruka which was formerly called Ka ma dho ka [...].

"He then wanted to return to Tibet in order to accompany dPal yes and on the way back traversing Kashmir he was chosen by a householder as the family guru.

"By his great merits he made his catechumen the king of mṄa ris with the people round him. Then he went to Bodhgayā in India where the king gin tan can Rāmapāla was his benefactor and gave him the title of supreme master of the mystic assembly [...].

"Then he went to China. On the way he met Karma pa who entrusted to him the charge of helping him in transmitting the doctrine; in China he was invited by the king Go pā la, but after one year he returned; in fact he did not receive even a needle. He passed away at the age of seventy".

This biography gives therefore the following points of chronological fixity; he was the disciple of rGod ts'aṅ pa, contemporary with a king of Bodhgayā, Rāmapāla by name, with a king of China called Go pā la and with the famous Tibetan reformer Karma-bakshi. The date of this last doctor is known; according to the chronological table published by Csoma de Kőrös and extracted from the Vaidūrya dkar po the date of his birth is to be fixed at 1200 CE (Csoma 1202). As to the Emperor of China there

is little doubt that his name has been modified so that it might assume an Indian form: it is quite clear that it corresponds to Kubilai. Rāmpāla, king of Bodhgayā, was perhaps a petty chief of the place. Anyhow these chronological references are quite sufficient to establish the approximate date of our pilgrim. He must have lived in the 13th century. The fact that he was appointed by Karma-bakshi as his assistant while he was on the way to China seems to imply that Karma bakshi was already old. Otherwise, there would have been no need of entrusting the school and the teaching to a probable successor.

So it seems quite probable that the travel of our pilgrim to Orgyan took place after 1250. The itinerary of Orgyan pa is to be found in a biography of this Tibetan sādhu which I discovered in the library of the monastery of Hemis when in 1930 I spent the summer there and under the guidance of the skugšogs sTag ts'aṅ ras pa had the rare opportunity of investigating the large collection of block prints and manuscripts that it contains.

This biography is preserved in a bulky manuscript on paper which is very old but incomplete. The work seems to be very rare. I never found mention of it in other monasteries which I visited; the biography of Orgyan pa is not even included in that vast collection which is the *dK'ar rgyud rnam t'ar sgron me* or at least in the copy[12] which I possess.

This biography deserves special attention because it shows some peculiarities of its own; it has not been elaborated with literary pretensions; there are many terms in it which are absolutely colloquial, chiefly used in Western Tibet.

I cannot help thinking that this itinerary has not been revised; it looks like a first redaction of the narrative of the travel written by some disciples of Orgyan pa himself. Not rarely he speaks in the first person. This fact augments the interest of the book. Of course there is a great deal of legend even in it. But this cannot be avoided; there is hardly any doubt that Orgyan pa really believed many of the things which he told his disciples. We must not forget the special spiritual atmosphere in which these *yogin*s live; boundaries between reality and pure imagination disappear. Whatever happens in this universe is not due to natural events fixed by certain laws, but is the product of multifarious forces which react upon one another. The most natural facts appear to the *grub t'ob* as the symbol or the manifestation of inner forces which, though unknown to the rest of the world, are no longer a mystery to him – or upon which he cannot

12 *dKar rgyud rnams kyi rnam t'ar gyi sgrorn me; dkar rgyud* is here used for the more common *bka' rgyud*.

have his hold through his psychic powers. We may laugh when we read that every woman he meets appears to him as a ḍākinī; but we must not forget the psychology of this pilgrim who had gone to the fairy land of the *ḍākinī*s in order to experience there those realizations to which the Tantras contained so many allusions. Anyhow these magical and fantastic elements are few in comparison with the traditional biographies (*rnam t'ar*) of the Tibetan saints; even in the short biography of Orgyan pa by Pad ma dkar po the historical and geographical data almost disappear under the growth of legends and dreams and visions. The greater the distance from the saint, the lesser the truth about him. The itinerary as it is has not been subject to this process. All this shows that the importance of the travels of our Tibetan pilgrim must not be denied. It is quite possibly an almost contemporary record of a journey to a country which was already considered as a magic land, and was seen through the eyes of a man who had no sight for reality. Still, we can follow quite well his track, from Tibet to Jalandhara, then to India, to the Indus, to the Swāt Valley, to the sacred mountain of Ilam, and then back to Kashmir through the Hazara district.

There are some ethnological and historical data to be collected in these pages which are confirmed by Persian or European travellers.

They also show that at the time of the traveller Buddhism was still surviving in the Swāt Valley though Islam had already begun to eradicate its last trace.

In this way Orgyan pa renewed, as it were, the old tradition of the Lotsāvas who had gone to the sacred land of India in order to study there Sanskrit and to learn from the doctors of Nālandā or Vikramaśilā the esoterism of the Tantras; of course, Buddhism had in the meantime lost in India its vital force and perhaps not very much work was left to the translators. But the contact with the holy land was still considered, as it is up to now among the Tibetans, to be purifying to the spirit and the cause of new inspirations. In the case of Orgyan pa it is quite possible that the travels of his master influenced him and led him to undertake the long journey to the far away country of Swāt. In fact we know that rGod ts'aṅ pa went up to Jalandhara, which was another *pīṭha* according to the Buddhist tradition: it is one of the twenty-four places of Vajrakāya as located by the Tantras within the Himālayas. It also gave the name to a famous *siddha*, viz., Jalandhara-pa.[13]

The short biography of rGod ts'aṅ pa in the *C'os ḥbyuṅ* of Pad ma dkar po contains nothing more than the scanty information that he went

13 Cf. Tāranātha, *Edelsteinmine*, p. 59.

to Jalandhara;[14] but I thought that perhaps in the original *rnam t'ar*, if any ever existed, it would have been possible to find a larger account of his travels.

In my 1933 journey, I discovered in Spiti a manuscript containing a large biography of this saint[15] and, as I expected, I found that it has preserved from page 43 to page 53 the itinerary which he followed in his pilgrimage to the holy *tīrtha*. Since it is rather detailed and fairly old, in as much it describes a journey which must have taken place in the first quarter of the 13th century, I think it to be worthy of notice. I therefore give a translation of all the passages containing some useful data. The text is also appended since manuscripts of this work are, I suppose, not easily accessible. I add that only passages of geographical and historical interest have been translated; all portions containing mere legends or those devoid of any real importance have been suppressed.

Though short, the text contains some useful information about the Himalayan countries and their ethnology. It also shows that the area where Buddhism had penetrated was more or less similar to that of the present day.

Spiti was already a centre of Lamaism: in its mountains rGod ts'aṅ pa finds many famous ascetics. Lāhul was Buddhist, but no outstanding personality was met by him: no mention is made of Trilokanāth, and the tribes of Mon pa – as he calls them – were rather unfriendly towards Buddhism.

Though he met a Buddhist Sādhu on the way back from Chambā, the people there seem to have been specially Hindu and rather orthodox. Anyhow it appears that they were not yet accustomed to seeing Tibetan pilgrims and were therefore not liberal towards them: things changed later on and at the time of śTag ts'aṅ ras pa there was a regular intercourse between Jalandhara and Tibet as there is even now. There is hardly any doubt that this was chiefly due to the travels of Tibetan pilgrims of the *rDsogs c'en* and specially of *bKa' rgyud pa* sects who used to visit the sacred places of Buddhist tradition. After rGod ts'aṅ pa their number must have considerably increased: to-day there is a regular intercourse along the routes and the tracks of western Tibet.

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14 Even his biography which is contained as a separate chapter in the *dKar rgyud rnams kyi rnam t'ar gyi sgron me* and which bears the title *rGyal brgod ts'aṅ pai rnam t'ar gnad bsdus pai sgron me* is far from being exhaustive.

15 The full title is *rGyal ba rGod ts'aṅ pa mgon po rdo rjei rnam t'ar mt'oṅ ba don ldan nor bui p'reṅ ba*.

From there they descend to the holy *tīrthas* of the Buddhist tradition, to Amritsar where the tank of the Golden Temple is believed to be the lake of Padmasambhava, to Bodhgayā, to Sārnāth. It was through these routes that there came down to the Indian plains the Lama who inspired some of the most fascinating pages in the *Kim* of Rudyard Kipling. That was no fiction but a real happening; so I was told by Sir Aurel Stein in one of those interesting talks in which he pours as it were his unrivalled experience of things Asiatic.

The inspiration came to Kipling from a holy man, a Tibetan *sādhu*, who many years ago came as far as Lahore and enquired from the father of the poet about the holy places to be visited in India. This Lama renewed the tradition of his ancient forerunners and was certainly unaware that he was to become one of the most interesting figures of modern literature. Rudyard was then still a boy, but so great was the impression he received on seeing the Himālayan-traveller that it never faded from his memory.

"From the country of Žaṅ-žuṅ he went upwards. Along this route there is the holy place of Tretapuri[16] which corresponds to the physical sphere in the list of the twenty four places (of the Vajrakāya).[17] It is also the place where three valleys meet[18]; there from the root of a high mountain, the river Gaṅgā flows downwards.[19] Along its banks there are three divine abodes[20] of Maheśvara[...]. He (*viz.,* rGod ts'aṅ pa) remained there for a few days and his mind and his good inclinations greatly developed; great is the benediction one gets in that place. Then proceeding downwards he went to Maṅ naṅ of Guge[21] in the country of Zaṅ žuṅ.[22] It was the residence of Atīśa

16 *Viz*., Tirthapuri of the maps on the right side of the Sutlej to the west of Kailāsa. See below.

17 As to the mystic equivalence of these places see below.

18 The three valleys arc that of the Sutlej, that of Missar and that of the river which flows into the Sutlej, to the South of Tirthapuri.

19 Gaṅgā means of course the Sutlej.

20 Lha brten (Lha rten) is, in this case, rather "a divine abode" than temple: as I said elsewhere, every rock near the temple of Tirthapuri is supposed to be the abode of some god or Tāntric deity. G. Tucci, *Santi e briganti nel Tibet ignoto*, p. 120.

21 Maṅ naṅ is to the South-East of Toling; it was the birth-place of the lotsāva of Maṅ naṅ, one of the pupils of Rin c'en bzaṅ po. See G. Tucci, *Indo-Tibetica*, Vol II. *Rin c'en bzaṅ po e la rinascita del Buddhismo nel Tibet Occidentale intorno al mille*. I visited this place during my Tibetan expedition of 1935 and as I stated in the *Illustrated London News*, 28th January 1936, I found there three chapels: in one of which splendid frescoes by Indan artists of the 11th century still exist. See G. Tucci, Indian Paintings in Western Tibetan Temples, *Artibus Asiae VII, p. 191.*

22 Although, as a rule, Žaṅ žuṅ is considered to be a synonym of Guge, this passage seems to show that Žaṅ žuṅ had a wider extension and that Guge was merely a province of the same. The same fact is pointed out by the travels of sTag ts'aṅ ras pa and by a very accurate biography of the Saskya chiefs which I found in Shipki. *Bla ma brgyud pau rnam par t'ar ṅa mts'ar gsaṅ ba*, p. 8, a: *pu raṅ, žaṅ žuṅ, glo bo,*

and there is a miraculous spring. Then he went downwards to the temple mT'o ldiṅ in Zaṅ žuṅ where he saw the residence of Lha btsun Byaṅ c'ub 'od, etc.[23] He went without hesitation through the big rivers, but his body enjoyed a very good health. Then, having crossed the whole country of Žaṅ žuṅ he went to Spiti, where, above Bi lcogs,[24] he met the great *Siddha* K'a rag pa who was unrivalled in the meditation of the rDsogs c'en system and had been continually sitting in meditation crossed-legged for thirty years; rGod ts'aṅ pa asked him for the explanation of the law, but since he wanted some presents, he replied that being a beggar he had nothing to offer. The other then said that he could not impart any teaching. rGod ts'aṅ pa presented him mentally with the seven elements of worship[25] and the *siddha* then said that this was the best offering. He, then, imparted to him the instruction concerning the five meditations,[26] *viz.,* that of the all-embracing Vairocana, that of Akṣobhya (*viz.,* the non-perception of manifestations), that of Ratnasambhava (*viz.,* the immanent identity of everything), that of Amitābha (*viz,* happiness and unsubstantiality both unconceivable by mind), and that of Amoghasiddhi (*viz,* the spontaneous activity). Then, going upwards he found in a small monastery a naked monk who (continually) counted (while reciting it) the syllable *"hūm."* While counting the *"hūms"* he uttered, he had become a *siddha* who had realized that all imaginations are self-contradictory. Proceeding further he met a great *siddha* called "the man from Brag smug." This master was continually sitting in meditation and did not speak a word to anybody [...].

Then he went to Gar śa where there is the mountain Gandhala.[27] This mountain is one mile high and on its top there is the selfborn *stūpa* [stupa]

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dol po, guge.

23 On Lha btsun Byan c'ub 'od, see G. Tucci, *Indo-Tibetica*, Vol II. *Rin c'en bzaṅ po e la rinascita del Buddhismo nel Tibet Occidentale intorno al mille*, p. 17 ff.

24 Bilcogs is perphaps Pilche in the Lipak valley opposite Nako.

25 This refers to *mānasapūjā* which as we know is considered to be the best.

26 These meditations on the five *tathāgatas* correspond to the five mystic knowledges (*pañcajñāna*) upon which see G. Tucci, *Indo-Tibetica*, Vol. III, Part I, p. 55.

27 This seems to show that our pilgrim went from Spiti to Lahul (*Gar śa or Gar za*) through the Chandra valley which was formerly the usual route between the two provinces before the Shigr glacier collapsed. See Hutchinson and Vogel, *History of the Panjab Hill States,* II, p. 449. Gandhola (Guru Ghantal). According to the tradition which was told during my visit to the place during my travels of 1931, another mountain was the abode of the famous place Dril bu ri, *viz.* the mountain of the bell, *viz.* provably of the *siddha Ghaṇṭā pā* whose cave is still shown from afar; this explains the Tibetan name of the *siddha Ghaṇṭā pā,* upon whom see A. Grünwedel, *Die Geschicten der 84 Zauberer, p. 192.* This Dril bu ri is pheraps that alluded to by Taranatha, *Edelsteinmine, p. 17.* On Gandhola and Dril bu ri there is a māhātmya *gnas c'en dril bu ri daṅ ghan dho la gnas yig don gsal ba.* It is therefore evident that Dril Bu ri and Gandhola are two differet places. Dril bu ri is the mountain called after the Siddha referred

called *dharma mu tri*.[28] He saw it. On its four sides there are miraculous rivers and trees. It is a place blessed by all presiding deities[29] and *ḍākinīs:* it is also the residence of *yogin*s and *yoginī*s who have attained to perfection. It is a place absolutely superior to all others [...].

There was a kind of small monastery above the village; since he did not want to stop there, he went to the Lotsāva of mGar[30] and informed him about his plan of going as far as Dsva lan dha ra (Jalandhara), but the Lotsāva replied that he could not reach the place and that he would scarcely survive [...].[31]

Then he despatched an interpreter carrying also the provisions who told everything to the minister of the king of Cambe (Chambā) who was called Su tu, and since this one asked him to lead along the two great ascetics, he replied that if the king gave the order they would come after due deliberation. Three days after, leaving Gar śa they reached the bottom of a high pass full of snow reflecting like a mirror. It was so high that it seemed to rise to heaven.[32] They were considering how it would have been possible to find a way there, when they met many Mon pa[33] who carried loads: "so – they thought – if these get through, we also can get through." Then those Mon pa with the help of the pick-axe began digging their track and went on; we also followed them. At midday we reached the pass. But the descent was even steeper than the ascent so that we began to be frightened, thinking how we could go through it. But one of the Mon pa leading the way and being tied by a rope to the waist, dug some holes in the rock with his pick-axe so that we also went slowly after him. At dusk we reached the bottom of the pass [...]. Then after about twelve days we

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to above and Gandhola is called after the temple of Bodhgayā. The *māhātmya* of Gandhola has been translated and edited after this book of mine had been sent to the press by Dr. Schubert: "Der tibetische Māhātma des Walfahrtsplatzes Triloknāth," in *Artibus Asiae*, Vols. IV and V.

28 Perhaps, *dharmamūrti*; every *stūpa* [stupa] contains the essence of dharma and is, therefore, the symbol of *dharma*.

29 This shows the connection of legends here located by the Tibetan tradition with the Tāntric cycle of Śaṃvara (viz., *Heruka*) in which the vira (*dpa' bod*) and *ḍākini* play such an important role. Upon this cycle vide G. Tucci, *Indo-Tibetica*, Vol. III, Part II, p. 42.

30 The village should be Gondla or Gundla. Is *mGar* for ḥGar?

31 The statement contained in *History of the Panjab Hill States* by J. Hutchinson and J.Ph. Vogel, p. 478, that Gozzan (rGod ts'aṅ) lama of Lahul lived in the 11th century must be corrected; nor was rGod ts'aṅ pa a man from Lahul, though his memory is still living in that country.

32 Is this the Drati pass (15,391 feet) now also dreaded on account of its stone avalanches? *Vide* Vogel, *Antìquities of the Chambā* [Chamba] *State,* I, p. 23.

33 Mon pa are called by Tibetans the tribes of the borderland towards India and in many places the aborigines of the provinces later on conquered by them. G. Dainelli, *Spedizione De Filippi,* I, p. 135. B. Laufer [1907], *kLu ḥbum bsdus pai sñiṅ po*, p. 94.

came to the presence of the king of Cambhe. There all the mountains of the country of the Mon come to an end. The plain of India is even as the palm of the hand. Grains, food, antelopes, etc., are extraordinarily good; green forests of sugar-cane wave in the wind so beautifully that the mind rejoices.

The king of the place is called Bi tsi kra ma;[34] he commands seven thousand officers; each officer is appointed over seven thousand soldiers. Inside the wall (of the royal palace) the *lotsāva* beat the *ḍamaru* and all men of the palace and all people from the town came to see (the visitors). The king himself sat in a *verandah* and expressed in many ways his people from the town came to see (the visitors). The king himself sat in a verandah and expressed in many ways his astonishment [...].[35] They remained there about five or six days and were happy. Then in three days they reached Dsa Ian dha ra. (When they entered the town), a man came out from a crowd, went in front of the ascetic[36] and saying "my master, my master" led him by his hand (to his house) and offered him good food. This country of Dsa lan dhara is but one of the twenty-four (branches as represented by the twenty-four) places (of the Vajrakāya)[37].

As to the external twenty-four holy places in the Jambu-dvīpa they are the twenty-four miraculous appearances of Heruka assumed by him in order to convert the twenty-four kinds of gross people capable of being converted. The twenty-four secret places correspond to the circles (*viz*., the symbols) of body, speech and spirit in the *maṇḍala*. The twenty-four internal places are in one's own body[...].

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34 Perhaps: vicitra var mā; one Vicitravarman is recorded by the Vamśāvali of Chambā as the son of Vidagdha (11th century), but no king of this name of the 13th century is known to me.

35 Is this the meaning of *par pir smra ba*?

36 Called in the text, as usual: *Rin po c'e, viz*., "the gem."

37 According to various Tāntric schools and specially that of Śaṃvara the soil of India is considered to be the *vajra*-body of Buddha and it is divided into twenty-four limbs, each corresponding to a holy place (*piṭha*) of famous renown. The 24 are presided over by 24 deities called *dpa' bod* regularly included in the mystic *maṇḍala* of the 62 deities of the Śaṃvaratantra. I have given the complete list and description of these deities in my *Indo-Tibetica*, Vol. III, Part II, p. 42 ff. where the Tibetan literature on this subject has been investigated. Our pilgrim following evidently a Tibetan tradition, locates the *piṭhas* of the diamond-body in North-Western India: so at the end of his travels to the Swāt Valley Orgyan pa can boast of having made the tour of all the 24 holy places. The Tibetan tradition accepted by rGod Ts'aṅ pa, Orgyan pa and śTag ts'aṅ ras pa is certainly more recent than the other alluded to in the rituals of the *Śaṃvaratantra*. According to this passage of rGod ts'aṅ pa there are:
(a) A series of 24 places geographically located in the supposed *Vajra-kāya*: they are supposed to be the mystic abodes of various manifestations of Heruka.
(b) The 24 places as reproduced in the symbolic spheres of the *maṇḍala*, they are secret in so far as their significance is explained by the *guru* to the disciple after a proper initiation.
(c) The 24 places in that *maṇḍala* which is one ts's own body; they must be meditated upon in the *ādhyātmikā-pūjā*.

In Dsa lan dhara all protectors *(vīra)* and *ḍākinī* assemble as clouds. As to this country it is as even as the palm of the hand and easy; *bodhi-trees* and palm-trees and pines of various kinds grow (in this country) and many medical plants such as the three myrobalans grow also there.

There are many fruit-trees such as apricots, pears, apples, peaches, walnuts, etc.; many flowers such as all kinds of lotuses, *padma*, *kumuda* and *puṇḍarika* can be found there. The country resounds with the voices of peacocks, parrots, cranes and many other birds. This place resounding with (the noise of) beautiful game such as black antelopes, deer, tigers and leopards, is physically a natural place in whose interior gods and goddesses abide. To the left and to the right there are two big rivers which in their course meet; here along the bend of a mountain-spur in the shape of a sleeping elephant in the town of Nāga ko tre[38] with five thousand inhabitants. On the spur of that mountain there is a great temple called Dsa va la mu gi[39] in which both believers and unbelievers offer their worship. Thirty villages are in charge of this temple. The very day the pilgrim arrived and went to Dsva la mu khe, in the night there were in the temple sixty or seventy girls, all virgins, beautiful and charming, adorned with five kinds of symbols like divine girls, dressed and adorned with various ornaments such as the jewelled crown. Some of them carried in their hands flowers and other things for the pūjā such as incense, etc. The girls having covered their head with a cotton veil, entered the temple. The pilgrim followed them, but a man of low class holding the door-bolt did not allow him to go farther; but he, without hesitation, pushed the door and went in. The other stood up but was unable to hit him, (the pilgrim) went inside. One of the principal ladies said "Sit down here, all these are *ḍākinīs*.[40] Then that lady began to sing some songs. The other girls sang as if they were either the sixteen mystic wisdoms (*vidyā*) or the twenty goddesses, made the offerings with the various ingredients of the pūjā such as flowers, incense, etc. They sang songs and danced accompanying the dance with gestures of the hands [...].

In front of that great town, downwards, there are five cemeteries.[41] The first is called Ka ma ku ldan sar where Brahmins and others carry pure corpses. Then there is the cemetery P'a ga su. It is a hill upon an even plain.

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38 *Viz.*, Nagarkot.

39 *Viz.,* Jvālāmukhi. "Believers (*p'yi*) and unbelievers (*naṅ*)" are here respectively the Buddhists and the Hindus, but later on, at the times of s'Tag ts'aṅ ras pa, under the name of "believers" both Hindus and Buddhists are included, the unbelievers then being the Muslims.

40 In spite of the corruption of the text it is easy to perceive that the sentence is in vernacular.

41 The most famous of these cemeteries seems to have been that of Lagura or Laṅgura, referred to also by Orgyan pa and sTag ts'aṅ.

On the top there is a temple of the heretics. It is the place where Śaṃvara resides. Then there is the great cemetery called La gu ra of triangular shape. There are images of the Sun and of the Moon with the symbols of *āli* and *kāli*.[42] Between these two, on a kind of pillar, there is a self-born image of Bhaṭṭarikā-yoginī. Then there is another great cemetery called Mi bkra sa ra which bestows great benediction upon those who dwell in it and is possessed of various propitious signs. Then there is the cemetery Si ti sa ra which is in turn a meeting place of the protectors and *ḍākinīs*. If one resides for some days in these cemeteries one's own merits greatly increase, and the (good) inclinations develop by abiding specially in the two great cemeteries La gu ra and P'a ga su ra [...].

In that town there are many begging monks among the unbelievers as well as among the believers, either noble *Yogins or Brahmins.*

As to the time for collecting alms (it is as follows). The mistress of the house gets up as soon as the sun begins to warm and after having well swept the house leads (out) the oxen and cleans the *verandah*. Their houses are cleaner than the monasteries and on the earthen walls many designs are painted. On one side of the kitchen they boil rice-pap and then the mistress of the house carrying a sesamum-oil-lamp burns some incense of good smell: then putting some hot rice-pap upon a plate of bell-metal she goes out, and when the family has bathed, she worships the sun and the moon, then the image of Śiva, the goddess of the outer-door and the goddess of the inner door.[43] Then the mistress of the house goes inside and when the rice-pap is cold, she eats it along with the husband, avoiding any uncleanness. At that time the smell of the aromatic herbs spreads out and all beggars go for alms. The *yogins* blow three times their brass-bell and carrying in one hand the gourd and in another the *ḍamaru*, they reach the door of a house, make the *ḍamaru* resound in various ways and say, "Give alms and practise the law."

The country which is very big is called Dsva lan dha ra, but it has numberless towns; Na ga ko te means in Tibetan "The castle of the snake." He stopped in that place for about five months, but since the nourishment was scanty and agreeable food was lacking, his body was in a very bad

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42 *Āli* is the series of the vowels and *kāli* the series of the consonants, the two elements of all mantras and the symbols of cosmic creation. According to the Tantras, the two series are respectively encircling the sun and the moon, *viz*., the mystic circles in the *nābhipadma*, *viz*., the lotus of the navel-wheel at the junction of the veins *idā* and *piṅgalā*. Sun and moon are therefore symbols of the two aspects of the divine intelligence as it realizes itself in the reality of the phenomena. *Bhaṭṭarikā-yogini* is the symbol of the central vein, the *suṣumnā* corresponding to the *turīya* state.

43 I do not know the name of the two gods of the door; for the protector of the door, see W. Crooke, *Religion and Folklore of Northern India,* 1926, pp. 98-99.

condition. Then he returned to Tibet. Avoiding the route he took formerly, he went by a short-cut since he wanted to visit the holy place of Ku lu ṭa. After two days along that route he met in a place called Ki ri raṃ a great ascetic called Anupama whom he asked for the explanation of the law. The other uttered "Homage to the Buddha, homage to the Dharma, homage to the community", thus bestowing upon him the protection of the three jewels, and then he added: "We both are two *vajra*-brethren,[44] disciples of Ācārya Nāgārjuna. Go to Tibet, you will greatly benefit the creatures."

Then he went to the holy place (*tīrtha*) of Ku lu ṭa which corresponds to the knees of the body included in the circle of the (*Vajra-)kāya* as represented by the twenty-four holy places. The core of this place is called Siddhi where there is a forest of white lotuses in flower; there, upon a stone there are the foot-prints of Buddha.[45] In that place one reaches quickly the best powers of the common degree,[46] but one meets also many hindrances; in this place there are two venerable (*bhadanta*) and one *yogin*.

Then he went to Gar śa; then to the retreat in Ghan dha la. He spent there the summer; and his inclinations to the practice of the good greatly increased. Then in the autumn he reached the pass of rTsaṅ śod in Spiti.

I must confess that these itineraries of the Tibetan monks are far from that exactness which we admire in the writings of the Chinese travellers. As I said before, not only a great deal of legendary and fantastic elements permeates their descriptions, but the itinerary itself can, hardly be followed from one place to another. Many reasons account for this fact; first of all proper names are spelt in the most arbitrary ways; there is no trace of the strict phonetic rule generally followed by the Chinese pilgrims. The Tibetan travellers try to transcribe into Tibetan letters the spelling of the various places which they happened to visit; but this transcription is often imperfect.

We cannot also forget that their works were for a long time copied by monks of various capacities who never saw the places spoken of by the pilgrims. This is the reason why so many mistakes creep into these biographies, increasing the inaccuracies of the manuscripts which, as is well known to scholars, are, as a rule, far from being correct.

There are also cases when the authors attempt translating foreign names according to no fixed rule or according to some fanciful etymologies which

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44 *Viz.,* fellow-disciples in the mystic school of Nāgārjuna, the most famous master of the *Vajrayāna*.

45 Perhaps the same as the *stūpa* alluded to by Yuan Chwang, I. 131.

46 *Viz.,* of the Prajñāpāramitā class.

make very difficult the identification of the original. No criterion is also followed as regards enumeration of the places recorded in their narrative. In some cases the places are mentioned one after another; in other cases our pilgrims seem to forget the intermediate halts and record only the starting-point and the place of arrival. The direction is rarely given and even when noted it cannot claim to be always exact. Distances are never registered except in days: but this does not help us very much, because we do not exactly know the average length of their marches. As a rule the Tibetans are good walkers, but they halt a good deal during the day. So far as my experience goes, I can say that they march at the average of 10 miles per day. But in India they seem to proceed more slowly on account of the heat and the different conditions of the soil to which they are unaccustomed; on the whole, travelling in the plains is for them more tiring than marching through the highlands and the plateaus of their fatherland.

Records of speed are often mentioned in these writings, but we are confronted with exaggerations intended to show the miraculous powers of these *yogins* and their proficiency in those special *Haṭhayoga* practices in which the *rluṅ pa* are said to be specially expert.[47]

For all these reasons it is particularly difficult to locate the places mentioned in our itineraries; localization on the basis of mere similarity of spelling of names when no distance and no direction is given is particularly doubtful. I must also confess that my interest is rather centred upon other branches of oriental literature than history and geography; this increases the difficulty of my task. But my purpose has only been to place before scholars more qualified for this kind of research than myself certain texts which I happened to find and which are still difficult of access. I leave them to draw the conclusions, if any, from the sources here made accessible. As regards these sources I must add that the Tibetan text of Orgyan pa has been appended since it seems to be very rare. I selected those portions of his vast biography which have a real historical or geographical significance; legends, dreams, prophecies which enliven the narrative have been suppressed. But I thought it necessary to add to the travels of Orgyan pa the summary of those of śTag ts'aṅ ras pa, who is also known under the name of Orgyan pa Ñag dbaṅ rgya mts'o and is the founder of the monastery of Hemis in Ladakh. His date is known, since we are told in the Chronicles of Ladakh that he was a contemporary of King Seṅ ge rnam rgyal (about 1590- I 635).[48]

47 D. Neel, *Mystiques et Magiciens du Tibet*, p. 210.

48 A.H. Franke, *Chronicles of Western Tibet*, pp. 108, 109.

His biography is easily accessible as it is printed in the monastery of Hemis, and it seems to have been composed at the time of the same ruler mentioned above by bSod nams rGyal mts'aṅ dpal bzaṅ po. It bears the following title: *Au ṭi ya ṅag dbaṅ rgya mts'oi rnam t'ar legs bris vai dū rya dkar poi rgyud man.* This section, which comprehends the biography proper, is followed by the itinerary of Orgyan; *Orgyan mk'a' ḥgroi gliṅ gi lam yig t'ar lam bgrod pai t'em skas* written, according to the colophon, by sTag ts'aṅ himself and printed in Leh under the patronage of Seṅ ge rnam rgyal and the queen sKal bzaṅ sgrol ma.[49]

The third section consists of songs of sTag ts'aṅ ras pa in the traditional style of the *dohākoṣa* and of the poems of Milaraspa [Milarepa], and bears the title: *Orgyan pa ṅag dbaṅ rgya mts' oi mgur ḥbum zal gdams zab don ut pa lai ḥp' reṅ ba.*

As a rule, names of places in this itinerary are better spelt, but from the geographical point of view we are confronted with the same inaccuracy as has been referred to in other Tibetan itineraries; anyhow a good deal of other useful information is to be derived from the diary of sTag ts'aṅ ras pa.

This is the reason why I gave a resumé of all important passages concerned with the travels of this monk. In this case I did not add the Tibetan text, since it is not difficult now to get a copy of his complete biography from the monastery of Hemis which boasts of having this saint as its founder.

The comparison of the two itineraries, *viz.,* that of Orgyan pa and that of his later imitator proves very interesting; we realize the progress done by Islam during the three centuries which approximately intervene between the two travellers; sTag ts'aṅ ras pa set off with the *lam yig* of his predecessor as his guide; so, at least, we read in his notes of travel. But very often he failed to find the places there mentioned; is this fact due to the inaccuracy of the redaction of the diary of Orgyan pa which he employed or was it the result of historical events which in many a place had already altered the importance of old cities and villages and shifted the halting-places of caravans from one site to another?

I feel rather inclined to accept the first view; comparing the lists of the places visited by both pilgrims, we easily realize that the spelling of names in Orgyan pa's travels was badly handled by the copyists; I subjoin a few instances. While the manuscript at my disposal reads 'Bhrarmila', the copy used by sTag ts'aṅ had 'Varamila': so Orgyan pa's 'Sila' seems to

49 According to the researches of my pupil Doctor L. Petech, *A Study on the Chronicles of Ladakh*, Calcutta 1939, p. 147, Seṅ ge rnam rgyal lived up to 1640 or 1641.

correspond to ‘Hila’ of sTag ts’aṅ; of another place our manuscript gives two readings ‘Brahor’ and ‘Bhahola’, while the copy of sTag ts’aṅ reads ‘Hora’; so also while on the one side we have ‘Na ‘ugri’ or ‘Na ‘utri’ as the name of a big salt-mine, on the other side the itinerary used by sTag ts’aṅ reads ‘Bain hoti’. In this way it is clear that it is a difficult task for us to identify correctly the route followed by the pilgrims, as it was for sTag ts’aṅ to find out the places his predecessor went through. In fact comparing the lists here appended we must come to the conclusion that he followed a quite independent route; if we except the valley of Swāt proper, where more or less the itinerary is the same, the places registered in the *Lam yig* of sTag ts’aṅ are not to be found in that of Orgyan pa – the only exception being Malot and Rukāla; it can only be stated that sTag ts’aṅ went out of Swāt at least partially, by the same way by which his predecessor had entered; but this implies that Sandhi pa and Kavoka correspond to *Siddhabor, Kaboka, Ka’oka.* The route also to Kashmir is through Jhelum and the Pirpaṅjal and not through the Hazara district as in the case of Orgyan pa. The many adventures he met on the way, compelled sTag ts’aṅ to take long detours and very often to retrace his steps. Anyhow in order to have a better idea of the two routes it is interesting to give the list of the places as registered in the two itineraries.

[Reproduced here as facsimile from Tucci 1940[3]: fn.46 [1]: "The Arabic numbers show the distance in days fromone place to another, according to the itineraries. The spelling is that of the Tibetan texts."]

O rgyan pa

gDoṅ dmar

1/2 day

North door of Ti se
Ma p'am lake
Kulu
Maru
Gar ṇa ta ma mountain
Jālandhara Naga Ko tre (Nagarkoṭ)
Laṅ gu ra cemetery

20 days

Chandrabhaga river
[386]
Indranīla on that river
Bhrarmila

1 day

Si la
Town of the Mongols near a river flowing from Kashmir
Brahor (Bhahola)

1 day

Na'ugri, Na'utri

1 day (or 3 in the verses)

Malakoṭe (Malakoṭa)

5 days

Rukala

4 days

Rajahura
Sindhu river

sTag ts'aṅ ras pa

Ti se, Myaṅ po ri rdsoṅ,

Pretapuri, K'yuṅ luṅ,
Sarang-la, rNam rgyal, Pu
Sa, Soran, K'yags,
Su ge t'aṅ
Dsva la mukhe
Jālandhara- Kaṅgarkoṭ
Laṅ gu ra cemetery

1 day

Nu ru p'u

Sri na ga ra
Pa ṭhan na
Nosara
Ka ṭhu ha ra
Parurda
Paṭhanmusur
Sakiri
Salau
Bhets'arbhura
Salakaṇṭhu
Soṭakoṭa
Ghortsoraka

2 days

Balanagaratila
Kashmir
Varan

O rgyan pa

gDoṅ dmar

½ day

North door of Ti se
Ma p'am lake
Kulu
Maru
Gar ṇa ta ma mountain
Jālandhara Naga Ko tre (Nagarkoṭ)
Laṅ gu ra cemetery

20 days

Chandrabhaga river
[386]
Indranila on that river
Bhramila

1 day

Si la
Town of the Mongols near a river flowing from Kashmir
Brahor (Bhahola)

1 day

Na'ugri, Na'utri

1 day (or 3 in the verses)

Malakoṭe (Malakoṭa)

5 days

Rukala

4 days

Rajahura
Sindhu river

sTag ts'aṅ ras pa

Ti se, Myaṅ po ri rdsoṅ,

Pretapuri, K'yuṅ luṅ,
Sarang-la, rNam rgyal, Pu
Sa, Soran, K'yags,
Su ge t'aṅ
Dsva la mukhe
Jālandhara- Kaṅgarkoṭ
Laṅ gu ra cemetery

1 day

Nu ru p'u

Sri na ga ra
Pa ṭhan na
Nosara
Ka ṭhu ha ra
Parurda
Paṭhanmusur
Sakiri
Salau
Bhets'arbhura
Salakaṇṭhu
Soṭakoṭa
Ghortsoraka

2 days

Balanagaratila
Kashmir
Varan

sTag ts'aṅ ras pa

2 days

Malotta

2+9 days

Salt lake

3 days

Rukāla
Akkithial
Bhahupur
Mālapur
Uts'alapur
Sapunpur
Reuret
Atike – Indus
Mats'ilkanathatril
Pora
Nosara
Matańgana
Miṭhapāni
Mādha
Atsimi
Pakśili
Dhamdhori
Kiṭuhar
Bhaṭhurvar
Paṭhapaṃge
Mutadni
Kapola
Kandhahar
Hasonagar
Paruka
Nasbhala
Sik'ir
Momolavajra
Sithar
Bhayasahura
Hasonagar again
Paruba (before Paruka)
Nyapala

sTag ts'aṅ ras pa

Apuka
Killitila
Sikir
Momolavajra
Sinora
Pelahar
Muthilli
Muṣaṃbi
Muthikṣi
Mahātilli
Satāhulda
Kalabhyatsi
Saṅgiladhuba
Goṭhaiaśakam
Pass

3 days

Dsmok'ati where all the waters of O rgyan meet

5 days

Yalom pelom

5 days

K'arakśar

3 days

Rāyiśar

3 days

Rahorbhyara (Maṅgalaor)
Rāyisar again

1 day

Oḍiyāna (Dhumat'ala)
Kamalabir mountain
Maṅgalapāṇi
Oḍiyāna again
Rāyiśar
Midora
K'aragśar
Sandhibhor
Kavoka
Bhyatsabhasabhasor

sTag ts'aṅ ras pa

5 days

Sindhu
Radsahura (not far from Antike)

2 days

Nīla
Kamthe
[389]
Nepale
Nila'u
Laṅka
Horaña
Aśakamni
Mahatsindhe
Ghelamri

6 days

Gorśala

2 days

Kalpa
Rukāla
Rahorbunḍa
Ravata
Satā
Hati
Tsiru
Rutā
Dselom
Sara
Bhebar
Nośara
Ratsuga

3 days

Lithana
Pirbañtsa

2 days

Kashmir
Varan
Maṭe

10 days

Zaṅs dkar
Mar yul

As to the names of places, they are in general, no more accurate in sTag ts'aṅ than in Orgyan pa; many of them have lost their somewhat archaic forms often purely Sanskritic and have become more or less similar to modern names; Jalandhara is also registered as Kangarkot, Malakot [Malakoṭe] has become Malot, Orgyan is Kapur and so on. Whereas in Orgyan pa the Mongols are usually called Sog po or Hor, *viz*., the traditional Tibetan names for Mongols and Turks in sTag ts'aṅ they are known regularly as Mongol and as Pathan, though in his writings Pathan seems to have occasionally assumed the meaning of *'jagpa' viz*., robber.

But as regards Kashmir, the names are so like the modern ones that doubt may arise whether they have not been by chance given this shape in quite recent times, by some learned Lama of Hemis on the occasion of the reprint of the itinerary. One might think that to the same elaboration of the text are also perhaps due the dialogues in Hindi often inserted in the book, and which seem to have a quite modern turn. Bur certain forms as kindly suggested to me by my friend S.K. Chatterjee are now obsolete and point to an early stage of Hindi *hami, tumi, roṭi velā, khai*, etc.

I subjoin two examples:

Fol. 10– When sTag ts'aṅ escapes slavery in Momolavajra and is saved by a Brahmin in Sithar, the following dialogue takes place between the Tibetan pilgrim and that Brahmin (fol. 10, b):

Hindi	Translation of the Tibetan version
sT. Hami bhoṭanti dsogi huva	I am a Tibetan ascetic (Tib. rtogs ldan).
Br. Kaśimiri bha (corr. bho) ṭanti aya	Are you a Tibetan from Kashmir?
sT. Hami Kaśimiri nahi; hamara mahā tsinṇa huva Kaśimiri thibaṇṭa pari daśa masi nighaya hayi	I am not a Kashmiri: I am from (the province of dBus and gTsaṅ) beyond Kashmir; I left after ten months (journey).

When he meets the old Brahmin who with his caravan leads him to Rukāla (fol. 8, a).

Hindi	Translation of the Tibetan version
Br. Tu mi abo cham bheśa roti vela k'ahi kyi na hi	You come here; sit here, do you eat bread or not?
śT. K'ahi k'ahi	I do eat it.
Br. Hami bramze huva; tumi t'orra bh'yat'a sangi rdono ho dsa.	I am a Brahmin, wait a moment. Let us go together.

The comparison of the two itineraries is also interesting from many other points of view. It shows that at the time of Orgyan pa Islamic invasion had not yet completely destroyed the last traces of Buddhism and Hinduism. We find, in the account of his travels, hints of survival of small Hindu principalities in the Salt Range and in Uḍḍiyāna. As I said before, the names of places are still recorded in a Sanskritic form as can easily be realized even through the corruption that their spelling underwent in the Tibetan manuscripts. On the other hand, when śTag ts'aṅ undertook his travels, Islam had succeeded in establishing its supremacy more or less everywhere.

As to Orgyan, it appears, from the account of the two pilgrims, that Udegram-Manglaor was considered the very core of the country along with the sacred mountain of Ilam [Fig. 2.33b] already famous at the time of the Chinese travellers. But the kings of Orgyan did not reside there, but rather on the outskirts towards Hindustan. In the travels of Orgyan pa there is no mention of a king of Orgyan or of his capital; only a prefect is recorded as residing in a place called Kabo ko or Ka'oka, perhaps three days' march before the Karakār Pass. This prefect, to judge from his name, Rājadeva, was a Hindu or a Buddhist, certainly not a Muslim. At the time of śTag ts'aṅ ras pa the capital of Orgyan is said to be Dsamikoti which seems to have been placed along the bank of the Barandu. In fact, it was in a valley which collected the waters of the country of Orgyan, and at the same time one could reach from there the mountain Ilam in five days without crossing the Karakār Pass. This king was called Pañtsagaya. No mention is made of the religion he followed, but there is hardly any doubt that he was a Muslim, though very liberal and well disposed towards the Tibetan pilgrim.

These kings ruled therefore over a vast territory including, besides the Swāt proper, even part of Buner.

There is no record, in the accounts of our pilgrims, of monks or learned people who continued the tradition of Buddhist scholarship; if he had met any, Orgyan pa would not have failed to mention his name, as he did in the case of Kashmir.

Anyhow at the time of Orgyan pa, a popular and magic form of Buddhism still survived. Witchcraft, for which Uḍḍiyāna had been famous even in the times of the Chinese pilgrims, was then in full swing. But the old traditions recorded by the Chinese travellers and centred round the figure of Śākyamuni or his preachings seem to have been forgotten or to have ceased to attract the attention of the people. The atmosphere which surrounds and inspires the pilgrims is purely *tāntric.* Śaṃvara and Guhyasamāja have become the most prominent Mahāyāna deities; the place of Śākyamuni and his disciples has been taken over by Indrabhūti and Kambalapā. These facts quite agree with the revival of *Tāntric* Buddhism in the Swāt valley which was chiefly due to the work of Indrabhūiti and his followers, a work certainly deserving greater attention than has been given to them up to now.

At the time of sTag ts'aṅ there is not the slightest trace of any survival of Buddhism but we have only the mention of ruins; even the sādhus, who were occasionally his companions of travel or whom he found in the country, do not seem to have been Buddhist since they belonged to the sect of the Nāthapanthīyas.

1.1.1 Translation of The Itinerary of Orgyan Pa

Setting out from gDoṅ dmar in Pu raṅs[50] in half a day we[51] reached the North door of Tise,[52] the king of glaciers, and started meditating among a crowd of five hundred ascetics (*ras pa*).[53] Then we drunk the water of the (Lake) Map'am.[54]

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50 Pu raṅs is the easternmost province of Western Tibet. At the time of Orgyan pa it was under independent chiefs of the IDe family. See G. Tucci, *Indo-Tibetica,* Vol. II, *Rin c'en bzan po*, pp. 16, 22, and G. Tucci - E. Ghersi, *Secrets of Tibet,* p. 251. As to gDoṅ dmar, it is unknown to me.

51 *Viz.,* Orgyan pa and his companion dPal ye.

52 *Viz.,* Kailāsa; *Ti se* is the aboriginal name of Kailāsa; perhaps this name is to be related with *Te se* known in Tibetan demonology as one of the nethern spirits *(sa bdag).* According to the Bonpos, the mountain is sacred to *Gi K'od* or rather to the *Gi k'ods* because, in some Bonpo manuscripts I found that the Gi k'ods are 360. The Buddhists consider the Kailāsa as the mystic palace of bDe mc'og, viz., Śaṃvara: upon Śaṃvara see G. Tucci, *Indo-Tibetica,* Vol. III, Part II.

53 *Ras pa, viz.,* "a person wearing cotton clothes" is a common designation for all ascetics though it is specially applied to the *grub t'ob* of the *bKa' rgyud pa* sect.

54 Ma p'am or Ma p'aṅ is the name for Manosarovar; it is also called: *gyu ts'o* "turquoise-lake" from the colour of its waters, or*: ma dros pa* = anavatapta.

Then we arrived at Kulu (Ku lu ṭa) and Maru[55] which respectively correspond to the knees and the toes of the Vajra-body divided into twenty-four great places.

At that time we did in one day the road which to an ordinary man takes seven days, without relenting or being tired either in body or in spirit.[56] In this place a female *Kṣetrapāla* dropping pus and blood from the nose, said (to us): "First of all do not abide in front of the master. Then do not abide in the middle of thy companions. I stay here; I will procure (your) maintenance."

Then I thought that somehow I could go to Orgyan.[57]

Then during the hot months[58] we resided in the great mountain called Garṇaṭama[59] where many good medicinal plants grow; there are also five miraculous springs. At that place there was an Indian ascetic called "the Vulture," who was considered to be good in discussing (religious matters). Since I also explained thoroughly the doctrines of the various vehicles, all the ascetics who lived there were pleased.

Then, along with many Indian ascetics, we went to Jalandhara[60] corresponding to the top of the head of the twenty-four places (of the Vajra-body).

At that place there is a great town called Nagarkete (*viz.,* Nagarkoṭ). In a river there is a triangular[61] piece of land; digging of the soil there is forbidden: there is a cemetery[62] called Laṅ gura, where there is a boulder

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55 S. Lévi proposed to identify Maru with Chitral. From our accounts it seems that the Tibetan tradition, which must have some weight since it depends upon Indian data, located that country near Kulu. It must refer here to the Upper Chandrabhāgā Valley, bordering Charnpá; Maru, according to the Vaṃśāvali of the Chambā kings, is the reviver of the solar race and practically the founder of the royal lineage of Chambā. See Ph. Vogel, *Antiquities of the Chambā* [Chamba] *State,* I, pp. 81 and 91.

56 This refers to a special *yoga* practised by some Tibetan ascetics which is believed to develop the capacity of running at great speed. Those who practise this meditation are called, as we saw, *rluṅ p'a*.

57 Orgyan pa took that girl for a ḍākini.

58 For *dbyar ka* – summer, or *dbyar ba* – jyaiṣṭha: April-May.

59 Garṇaṭama cannot be located by me.

60 In the MSS. Dsva rar. As to this place see p. 87. Cf. J. Hutchinson and J.Ph. Vogel, *History of the Panjab Hill States*.

61 C'os ḥbyuṅ in this sense is not in the dictionaries but the glosses of Tson K'a pa on the Guhyasamājaṭikā by Candrakirti, fol. 93.6b—clearly states that it is a synonym of *zur gsum-"triangle*".

62 The correction *dur k'rod* for *k'rod* as in the manuscript is sure: rGod ts'aṅ pa and śTag ts'aṅ refer to the same place as a famous cemetery. So also Orgyan pa himself in this same page when he relates the story of the *gaṇacakra* which he and his companions held in this place (*Lagyura yi dur k'rod*)

which looks like a skull; a self-made (image) of Āryaṭṭārikā appears there.[63] To the North there is a famous image called Jvālāmukhi where on looking[64] at the divine face everything blazes in fire. Near the royal palace there is a cemetery called Miṭapara where there is a cave of the Mahātmā Nāgārjuna called Miṭaglupa. In front of it there is one of the eight kinds of trees called Nilavṛkṣa.[65] If you hurt it you die immediately. So he said.

> From that mountain, travelling one month we went to the south;
> In the royal palace of the country of Jalandhara
> There is a great bazaar where (one finds) goods (meeting) all wishes.
> I was not able to carry away any handsome good.

After twenty days' march from Jalandhara we reached a river running from Ghaṭali[66] called Chandrabhāgā on whose banks there is the town of Indranīla.

To the East there is the plain of rGya skyags.[67] One night we met (*lit*. there was) a woman who was putting, while singing, many weapons into a bag.[68] Next morning we met four Tartar horsemen and I was hit by one of them with the back of an axe; since I withstood him violently, he dragged me for half a day by the scarf I used in my ascetic exercises,[69] kicked me in the chest and, then, I lost the sight. But at that time I collected the vital force (*prāṇa*) and the mental force in the wheel of the *bindu* and I let them go into the central vein.[70]

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63 *Raṅ byon* for the more frequent*: raṅ ḥbyuṅ*: self-born.

64 *bstan = mig lta ba*.

65 According to the Tāntric tradition, each cemetery is possessed of its peculiar characteristics, *viz*., its own tree, its protecting deity, its *nāga*, etc. The lists from Sanskrit and Tibetan sources are given in *Indo-Tibetica*, Vol. III, Part II, p. 173 ff.

66 Ghaṭali is perhaps Gandhola referred to above in whose proximity the Chandra and Bhāgā meet.

67 Unidentified, but perhaps a translation of *Bhārata*.

68 According to Orgyan pa this woman must have been a ḍākiṇi for telling the impending danger.

69 *Sgom t'ag, yoyapaṭṭa*, the scarf used by ascetics for fastening together their limbs in some of the most difficult yoga-postures.

70 Orgyan pa refers to a Haṭha-yoga practice of preserving the vital force; mind-stuff, *sems*, (Skr. *citta*) is believed to have *prāṇa* with its five-fold principal aspects as its vehicle. In the moments of deep meditation this mind-stuff is made to enter in the central vein (*avadhūti, cāṇḍāli or madhyamā*) which is supposed to run from the top of the head to the *adhiṣṭānacakra, viz*., to the wheel under the navel; *a t'uṅ* "short *a*" is considered to be the symbol of the germinal consciousness as present in ourselves.

dPal[71] ye thought that I was dead. Then, restored to my strength, I made a great noise and I overpowered him with the exorcistic magnetising look, so that he was unable to speak and began to tremble. All our companions said that I was a *siddha*.

From Intanīla (*viz*., Indranīla) we reached Bhrarmila[72] in one day; from there we went to Sila. Then we arrived at a town of the Mongols whose name I have forgotten. From this place upwards Indians are mixed with Tartars. Some are Hindus (that is, people of India); some are Musurman (that is, Tartars); some being fused together and living in the plains are equally called Mo go la.

At that place there is a river flowing from Kashmir[73] we forded it and reached a town called Brahora[74] of 7,000,000 inhabitants (*sic*). The prefect of the town is a Tartar Malik Kardarina by name. One day's march from this town, there is a hill full of mineral salt; it is called Na'ugri; the salt (used in) Kashmir, Malo'o Ghodsar, Dhokur, Jālandhara[75] is taken from there. Many salt merchants come from this place even to Jālandhara. The big road to these salt-mines offers very little danger since one finds plenty of food, many companions and there are, usually, many bazaars. So he related.

From there we reached in one day Bhahola.[76]
From the river (which flows in that place)
we went to the west for one day's march.
There is a mountain of mineral salt called Nacutri.[77]
I did not carry away a bit of salt.
So he said.

71 dPal ye is, as we saw the companion of Orgyan pa.

72 According to the copy used by sTag ts'aṅ Varamila. As to Sila (sTag ts'aṅ: Hila) it may correspond to Helān.

73 *Viz*., the Jhelum – the town of which this pilgrim has forgotten the name is perhaps *Mong* or Haria.

74 The only big place on the route followed by Orgyan pa seems to be Pindi Dadan Khan which formerly was one of the biggest salt markets; of course the number of inhabitants is exaggerated. Naugiri must be searched for in the proximity of Khewra mines.

75 Malo'o is Malot, Ghodsar is Gujrat.

76 Evidently the same as Brahora on the river.

77 The same as Naugiri.

Then, in one day, we went to Malakoṭe[78] where we begged (food) from the queen (*rāṇī*) of that place, Bhujadevī by name,[79] and she gave us food, provisions and clothes. That place is famous as "the gate of the ocean, mine of jewels." There is a temple founded by king Hulahu.

There great plants of rtse bo[80] grow.
Then three days' march to the west[81]
In the town of Malakoṭa [Malakoṭe],
There is the gate of the mine of jewels (the ocean)
He did not carry away even a bundle of medical herbs.
All sorts of trees grow from the earth.
So he said.

There we went for five days to the North-West to the town of Rukala.[82] There a queen,[83] Somadevī by name, gave us provisions for the travel. Then in four days we reached Rajahura which is one of the four gates to Orgyan. The other three gates are Nila,[84] Purso, Ka'oka.

In Rajahura we went for alms; but as soon as we thought of eating (what we had collected), all fruits turned into ants and into worms. I showed it to dPal ye who felt nausea and was unable to eat. Winking the eyes I said "eat" and the rest of what I had been eating turned into fruits and grapes. But he did not feel the inconvenience of being without food and was not able (to partake of that).[85] So he related.

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78 Malot. Its temples are well known. For references see V.A. Smith, *History of Fine Arts in India and Ceylon*, 2nd Edition – p. 119, A. Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, pp. 74 and 143. It is difficult to state why Malot is called the "gate of the ocean"; perhaps this was due to the fact of there being some important market to which caravans used to carry goods from the sea and the Indus mouth. As to Hulagu it can hardly be, in spite of the similarity of spelling, the famous emperor who was almost a contemporary of our pilgrim: the temple alluded to must be a Hindu temple, as is proved by the statement of sTag ts'aṅ ras pa that it was destroyed by the Moghuls; according to *Archeological Report*, V, p. 185 it was founded by the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas.

79 Or shall we understand Bhojadeva? Rāṇi can also be a mistake for Rānā.

80 *ṛTse bo, viz., rtse po; rtse po* is, according to Sarat Chandra Das, a plant called in Indian texts *kaṇṭakāri*.

81 But, in the prose section, they reached Malot in one day only.

82 Rupwal: Nila is about ten miles to the North-West of this town.

83 Either rāṇā Somadeva or rāṇi Somadevi.

84 Perhaps the same as Nīla on the Soan River to the East of Pindi Gheb.

85 The translation of this passage is doubtful.

To the west of this town there flows the river Sindhu. It is one of the four rivers flowing (from the Kailāsa) and it springs forth from the mouth of a lion in the Kailāsa.[86] It flows through Maryul[87] and then, from the country of ḥBruša[88] on the North of Kashmir (which country borders on Zaṅsdkar and Purig),[89] through Persia[90] reaches Urgyan.

Taking hold of one another's hand we went to the ford of the Sindhu. I entered a boat and asked the boat man to pull the boat, but this man said: "No objection, (but) on the other side of the river they say there are Turks; there is fear of being killed." I replied that I was not afraid of dying and he pulled the boat. From this place upwards there is the country of Urgyan; there are 90,000 towns, but no other place there except Dhumat'ala[91] is called Urgyan. At that time Urgyan had been just conquered by the Turks. So he related.

Having forded that river, there is (*a town*) called Kalabur. We reached there at sunset; all inhabitants, men as well as women, thinking that we were Turks, began to hit us with stones; then we took shelter among some trees and they, saying that that night we could not go anywhere else, departed. But that very night a great storm broke out and we ran away unnoticed from the village.

He said that in the interior of Urgyan there were Persians. Then we met (*lit*. there were) a husband and wife who, running away from the Turks and returning home, drove cows and sheep, carrying with them a small child. We said to them: "We are two Tibetan monks going on pilgrimage

86 G. Tucci, *Indo-Tibetica*. Vol. I, p. 80. That is why the Indus is called by the Tibetans: *Seṅ ge k'a ḥbab.*

87 Maryul is Ladakh; I have shown elsewhere (*Indo-Tibetica*, Vol. II, p. 15 that though in recent times Maṅyul has been also used for *Maryul,* originally Maṅ yul was a district to the East of Purang on the borderland between Tibet and Nepal. It has been stated but I think on very poor grounds that the so-called Mo lo so (T. Watters, *On Yuan Chwan's travels* I, p. 299) corresponds to Ladakh; but the form Mar po suggested by Cunningham does not exist, at least to my knowledge.

88 ḥBruša is Gilgit. B. Laufer, *Die Bruza Sprache.*

89 Purig is the district of Kargil.

90 Stag gzig corresponds, as known to Tajig and is the usual name for Persia or Persian: of course Persia in our text refers to *Chilas* and must be understood in a broad sense as the countries depending upon Persia. This passage and the following statement point to the fact that the name of Orgyan was not confined to the Swāt valley, but included part of Buner and, roughly speaking, the territory between the Swāt and the Indus.

91 This implies the equivalence of Dhumat'ala, often spoken of in the Padmasambhava literature, with Orgyan; the name of Orgyan, Uḍḍiyāna still survives in the village Udegram, the Ora of the Greek authors I, upon which see Sir M.A. Aurel Stein, *On Alexander's track to the Indus.* Cf. also down below sTag ts'aṅ itinerary.

to Urgyan. Let us join you and accompany you as far as Dhumat'ala."[92] Then I carried the child and drove the cattle... Having forded the Sindhu we went to Bhik'robhasa; then in one day's march we reached Kaboko.[93] In this town all people have a virtuous mind and a great wisdom. There are provisions in great quantities and mines of carminium. Its perfect is called Rājadeva; he is the master of the greatest part of Urgyan.

One month to the west of that town[94]
To the west of the ford on the river Sindhu
There is the town of Ka'oka
Where there are mines of carminium
But he was unable to carry away even a bit of it.
So he said.

Then that liberal master gave in the country an entertainment and sent us a man to accompany us up to Bhonele, distant one day's march and, (as to the towns) beyond that place, (he gave us) a letter to lead us safely up to the holy place of Dhumat'ala (in which he had written): "Let them be accompanied by such and such to such and such places." From Bhonele we reached Siddhabhor and then, having forded a small river, we went in one day to K'aragk'ar.[95] From this place upwards they say there is the boundary.[96] There are good rice and wheat, and various kinds of good fruits get ripe; there are meadows green like the neck of the peacock.

(The country) is covered by soft herbs and by flowers of every kind of colour and smell; there is a river running through Urgyan called Kodambhar. To the East there is the mountain Ilo[97] which is the foremost of all mountains of the Jambudvīpa. There is no medical herb growing on the earth, which does not grow there. It is charming on account of its herbs,

92 In the manuscript Humatà la.

93 That the river Sindhu had been crossed has already been said: Bhik'robhasa was not named; but in its place mention was made of Kalabur: This implies that Bhik'sobha sa was considered the first important place after having crossed the Indus Kaboko seems as Ka co ka-mentioned at p. 108.

94 *Viz.*, Malot.

95 This small river seems to be the Barandu while K'aragk'ar must be a village in the proximity of the Karākar pass.

96 I am not quite sure that this is the rendering of: *so t'aṅ*.

97 This mountain has already been referred to by the Chinese pilgrims by whom it was called Hi lo. A. Foucher (BEFEO, 1901, p. 368, n.3) was the first to identify Hilo with the Ilam [Fig. 2.33b]. Cf. also M.A. Stein, *On Alexander's track*, p. 27 ff.

stalks, leaves and flowers. Sarabhas and other antelopes wander there quite freely. There are many gardens of grape, beautiful birds of every kind and of gracious colours make a deep chattering.

From that country we went to the west for seven days,
Up to the mountain Ilo, the peak of K'aragk'ar
In the mountain, Sarabhas play
And there are gardens of grape in abundance.
I did not covet anything.

Then, on one day we reached Rayik'ar[98] which is said to have been the capital of King Indrabhote [Indrabhūti].[99] Now it is divided into two towns: in one there are about sixty houses, in the other about forty. To the North there is a temple founded by King Indrabhote [Indrabhūti] and called Mangalaor, where there are various images in stone of Buddha (Muniīndra), Tārā and Lokeśvara.

When I saw from afar the country of Urgyan my (good) inclinations became very strong. In these places as soon as any common realization is experienced various P'ra men ma[100] flesh-eating *ḍākinīs,* come privately in front of (the experiencer) as a spouse. Near Rayik'ar there is a small river; it can be forded by a man and it runs to the South. Having forded it (one finds) in a protuberance of a rock the place where the great Siddha Lāvapā used to stay. A Ḍākinī let a shower of stones fall upon that (place), but Lāvapā showed the *tarjanīmudrā* and the stones remained in the sky just as a tent.[101] The Ācārya turned with his powers the ḍākiṇīs into sheep so that in that country all women disappeared;[102] the men assembled, went to their search but could not get (them). Then the Ācārya shaved all the sheep

98 This place seems to be Saidu; on this locality and its archeological importance see M.A. Stein, *op. cit*., pp. 36-39. It is called Ray śar by sTag ts'aṅ. While here there is no mention of any intermediary stage between Rayik'ar and Manglaor vaguely stated to be in the North and no notice therefore of Udegram=Dhumat'ala on the other hand down below it is rightly said that leaving Rayik'ar they reached in half a day Dhumat'ala. This last statement is of course quite correct. Manglaor should have been mentioned after Dhumat'ala. [Rayik' ar is elsewhere here identified with Rāja Gīrā /Udegram: see below fn. 195; see also Tucci 1971; in Tucci 1971 and 1977 Dhumat' ala was identified with Butkara].

99 *Viz.*, Indrabhūti the famous tantric teacher and the spiritual father, according to the Tibetan tradition, of Padmasambhava.

100 On these P'ra men ma, who were a special class of *yoginī* see G. Tucci, *Indo-Tibetica* III, I, p. 126.

101 Upon the local industry of rags bambala see M.A. Stein – op. cit., p. 89.

102 Because, in this country, women were all considered to be *ḍākinīs*.

and wore upon his body a woollen mantle (*lva; kambala*); from this he was called Lāvapa, *viz*., "the man of the woollen mantle."[103]

Then they went to make homage to him and asked him to let them free. He asked: "Do you make an engagement?" They agreed. Then he said: "Wear the shoes upon the head; insert a ring in the nose; use (*lit*. make) a girdle (in the shape of) a snake." This has become the custom of the country up to now.

A woman there said to me: "You are Indrabhoti." My disciple Śes rin asked: "Indrabhoti and Lāvapa did not live at a different time?" I said: "Lāvapa was not contemporary with the great (Indrabodhi [Indrabhūti]). There were two Indrabodhis; I am like the Younger." So he related.[104]

Near Rayik' ar there is the country of the P'ra men ma; all women know how to turn themselves by magical art into any form they want; they like flesh and blood and have the power to deprive every creature of its vitality and its strength. Then, in half a day we arrived at Dhumat'ala.[105] This is the core of the miraculous country or Urgyan. By the mere view of this country our cries (of joy) could not be counted. In front of it there is a self-appeared (image) of Āryabhaṭṭārikā in sandal wood; it is called Maṅgaladevī.

I slept before it and I perceived that some trouble (*lit*. hindrance) was to come. I asked dPal ye to prepare a stick but he would not hear. Next morning he went to three hamlets to the North and I went to the South to collect alms. I met some women who threw flowers upon me and put a dot of vermilion (on my forehead) making various symbols taught by the Tantras; so that my powers increased and my vitality greatly developed. But he[106] was surrounded by an armed crowd which was on the point of killing him; I ran to his rescue and when I said that he was my companion, they let him free. In this place there are about five hundred houses. All women know the art of magic and if you ask them: "Who are you?" they reply: "We are yoginīs." While I was lying down in front of Maṅgaladevī, one woman said (to me): "Enjoy a woman", but I hit her with a stick and she ran away. The day after a woman met us both with incense and scattered flowers upon us and honoured us. It was the gift for having kept that gem which are the

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103 This story is also related in the biography of the 84 Siddhas - Grünwedel - *Die Geschichten der 84 Zauberer*, p. 176 f. and *Edelstein mine*, p. 56 ff. See also the account of sTag t'saṅ ras pa. But our text is rather obscure.

104 All this passage seems to be a gloss or a later addition by some pupil of Orgyan pa. That there was more than one Indrabhūti is also accepted by Tāranātha, *Edelstein mine*, p. 109.

105 *Viz*., as we saw Orgyan, Uḍḍiyana, Udegrama.

106 *Viz*., dPal Ye.

moral rules. In this place there is a woman who has three eyes; another has a mark manifest on her forehead, *viz*., the coil of a *svastika* red as if designed with vermilion. She said: "I am a self-made yoginī. I can make everything appear in view." Then a Tartar said: "If you are a self-made yoginī, bring something from my country", and she immediately produced a bow and a Turkish hat, so that the Tartar was amazed. He said that this woman was the wife of the king of Dhumatala.[107]

Among the women of this town there is one who is said to be a yogini. Since it was difficult to recognise her. I took food from the hands of all women of the town and by eating it I surely got spiritual perfections from them. In the town of Kaboka[108] I took food from a woman called Saluṇṭapuca and as soon as I drank a cup of soup (given by her), the place began to tremble [...].

The great yoginīs famous in this place are four: Soni, Gasurī, Matangi, Tasasi.

Soni is (the ḍākinī known in Tibet as) ḥGro bzaṅ.[109]

To the west of this place there is a snow (mountain) called Kama'onka[110] where they say that there is the palace of the yoginīs: in its interior there is a cave for ascetics called Kamalaglupa; where there is the image of a Krodha of blue colour, with ornaments made of human bones; it has three eyes and is shining with splendour like the rays of the sun: he has (in his hands) a sword and a skull.

dPalye thought that it represented Śaṃvara.

To the East of this place there is a cemetery called Bhirsmasa[111] crowded by terrific assemblages as (thick as) clouds of dangerous ḍākinīs (in the shape of) boars, poisonous snakes, kites, crows and jackals.

A little to the North there is one of the eight kinds of trees called okaśavṛkṣa. A little to the South of that cemetery there is a self-made (image) in stone of a Kṣetrapāla, called Dhumunkhu. In proximity of that tree, on a stone called Kapalabhojon; there are self-made images in stone of

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107 rGyu ma tala is a mis-spelling for Dhumat'ala.

108 It must be the same as the place already mentioned at p.110. Though that town does not belong to the very centre of Orgyan which the pilgrim now describes, it is referred to again as being also a centre of those ḍākiṇīs whose powers Orgyan pa here praises.

109 The ḍākinī ḥGro hzaṅ is famous all over Tibet. Her *mam t'ar* or biography belongs to the most popular Tibetan literature.

110 But down below in the verse-section Kamadhoka.

111 *Viz*., *Bhirasmaśāna*.

Brahmā, Rudra and other deities. There, there is a palm tree which is called Maṅgalavṛkṣa, that is "the auspicious tree." In its proximity a spring called Maṅgalapāṇi; (that is, the auspicious water) runs to the South.[112]

To the East of this there is a small mountain called Śriparvata where many trees of seṅldaṅ[113] grow. To the west of this, in the rivulet Maṅgalāṇi there is a piece of land of triangular shape called Mulasaikoṭa; (?) there, there is (an image) of Āryabhaṭṭārikā spontaneously appeared. But now fearing the Tartar soldiers she stays in Dhumat'ala.

In front of it many women assemble and worship it ejaculating "kilitsili."[114] Those who are deprived of strength or humiliated are (thereby) favoured (by becoming) fortunate.

This is the principal of the twelve Śrīparvatas of India. On its border there is a valley known as the valley of Śrī. While I was sleeping for some days in a temple built by Indrabodhi [Indrabhūti] at the gate of Urgyan, many ḍākiṇīs assembled and preached the law. This is the very miraculous country of Urgyan.

From that country he went to the west for four days;
To the west of the "stone without touch"
To the north of the river Kodambari
To the east of the glacier Kamadhoka
There is the miraculous country of Urgyan
The ḍākinīs of the three places assuming human shape
Give enjoyments of inexhaustible pleasure.
But I did not seek for great enjoyments.
So he said.

In the miraculous country of Dhumat'ala there is the benediction of the Blessed one.

He said: "The individuals who are proficient (*lit.* good) in the Tantras, masculine as well as feminine,[115] obtain the instructions of the Ḍākiṇī of

112 Perhaps the same as the tree and the source alluded to by Sun Yung, p. 410, as being near the footprints of the Buddha. If this is the case, the places here mentioned must be near Tirāt.

113 Perhaps *Khadira*, Acacia Catechu.

114 *Kili-tsili* is a Mantra used in many a tantric ritual.

115 This refers to a twofold division of the Buddhist Tantras into feminine and masculine (literally 'mother' and 'father'), according as the medium of their experiences is the *prajṇā* or the *upāya*.

the three places. Wherefrom the spiritual connection with the deep road call be arrived at?"

Then dPalye said: "I believe (in all this), (but) let us go back to Tibet." I replied: From a country far away I reached this place without considering (the risk of) my life and I obtained a great benefit; the best could be to lay the head down here; if this is impossible, at least I want to abide here, at any rate, for three years." Then he said," Even if you do not want to depart, (at least) accompany me up to Rajahura. So we went. Our companions who seemed to be merchants said to me, "This friend of yours does not understand the language and will not get any alms. Without you this man is lost." Then I thought that it was a shame to leave in the way, among difficulties, a friend who had come to a holy place from a country far away and a fellow disciple of the same *guru*;[116] going downwards, we reached in five days (a place called) Ghari. Then in seven days we reached Urśar.[117] Then, having as companions some merchants we arrived to the gate of a terrific cemetery. When they saw it they were greatly afraid and said, "Ghosts will come and men will die." I said, "Do not fear. I can protect you from the ghosts"; and then by the blessing of Daṇḍa[118] nothing happened.

From that place we went to the east for seven days;
A terrific cemetery is to the south.
In the fortunate kingdom of Urśar
There is corn and no (land) lord, (so that) anybody can carry it away.
But I did not carry away a single grain.

Then, after three days, we arrived at Tsi k'ro ta;[119] there is a great river (coming out) from a rock in the mountain. There a merchant, being inflamed by a disease, began to fight, killed two (of his) companions and wounded another. Then I evoked the meditation of Guhyapati and overpowered him by the magic look; so that he immediately died; otherwise by fighting at close quarters they would have killed each other. So he related.

116 Viz., rGod ts'aṅ pa.

117 Uraṣā, *viz., Hazara*.

118 Perhaps Niladaṇḍa.

119 Perhaps in the proximity of Mozufferabad (is there any connection between Tsi K'rota and Charrota near this place?). The river along which the pilgrims reach Kashmir referred to lower down is obviously the Vitastā.

Then in one day we reached Ramikoṭi. On the other side of the river (which runs there) there is Rasmiśvari[120] (one of) the twenty-four places (of the Vajrakāya) which corresponds to the space between the eyebrows of the Vajrakāiya. There the space between the river coming from Kashmir and the water of a pond is similar in shape to the eyebrows.

> Thence four days' march to the east;
> there is a place (called) Rasmiśvari
> in the house of a beggar and nursed (him) and boiled wine
> but he did not carry away a single barley-paste ball.
> (Marching) to the right of the river (flowing) from Kashmir after nine days we arrived at a narrow valley called rDorjemula[121] and then reached Kashmir.

The surface (of this country) is flat like the palm of the hand and charming, stretching from East to West; in the North there is a lake pure as the sky, called Kamapara;[122] (the place) is lovely on account of the beautiful flowers; it is thickly covered with excellent trees bent (under the weight of) their ripe fruits; it is adorned by all sorts of ripe crops, and furnished with every kind of riches. It is a mine of knowledge sprung forth from that gem which is the teaching of Sākyamuni; every creature practises the white dharmas. It is the place to which refers the prophecy of the Prajñāpāramitā when it says:

> "it is the abode of many Buddhist paṇḍitas."

From there (we went) to Śrīnagara a town of three million and six hundred thousand inhabitants; having been ravaged by the Mongols now (they have been reduced) to no more than three millions.[123] Then we went

120 Rāmeśvara, as known, was and still is a famous *pīṭha* in South India, but in this Tantric cosmography, as accepted by the Tibetan writers, it has been located in the Western Himālayas which are supposed to comprehend the whole of the Vajrakāya. See G. Tucci, *Indo-Tibetica*. Vol. III, Part II, p. 43 ff. I cannot identify this Rāmeśvara referred to even by śTag ts'aṅ ras pa; it is anyhow clear that it has no relation with the Rāmāśrama which was a *pīṭha* in Kashmir and the Sanskritised name of Rāmuch (Ramusa) referred to in Nilamatapurāṇa and in the *Rājataraṅginī*. See M.A. Stein, *Kalhaṇa's Chronicle of Kashmir*. This place is on the road from Supiyan to Srinagar near Shozkroo.

121 rDorje mūla (lower down "Varamula") is a curious name half Tibetan and half Sanskritic: it evidently derives from a vernacular form of Varāhamula (now Baramula) where the first part of the word was taken by Orgyan pa as a corruption of Vajra.

122 Kamapara is perhaps a corruption of Kamalasara = Wular lake.

123 The number is, as usual, exaggerated.

to Vatipur[124] where the saffron grows. Then we arrived at Bhejibhara,[125] which counts nine hundred thousand inhabitants. There he asked many sacred Mantras of Śaṃvara and other Tantras of ḥBum mi Śri la[126] and of other Paṇḍitas. As they entered the town for alms many children began to hit them with bricks; but two girls saved them, led them into a house but gave them no food.

Then, came an old man who was the householder and (said to us) "If you do not stay (in my house) one day, it will be a shame to me." Then, having paid homage to us, he asked "Who are you?" We replied "We are religious men from Tibet and have gone on pilgrimage to Urgyan." They felt some doubts and called for a student who asked: "If you are men of the law, what kind of law do you know?"

Since I replied that I knew the Abhidharma (*mṅon pa*), we commented together upon logic and he agreed that it was true (that I knew the law).

Then he asked: "Besides this system, what else do you know?" When I said: "The Kālacakra" he replied: "It is false", and was amazed.[127] I insisted that it was true; then they called a student in order to see whether I had said the truth or not and after discussing the point he recognised that I was a learned man. Then they sent for an old man who could recite by heart the Vimalaprabhā;[128] the husband was famous as a learned man all over Kashmir. I discussed with the wife and got myself out fairly well.

The lady said: "O learned man, what (else) do you know or have heard."

I replied: "I have thrown away all objects of knowledge as grass and having gone to Urgyan and to other holy places I have forgotten (everything)." Then they agreed that I really was a Tibetan paṇḍit and were pleased. Since I was made known by the name of "Mongol" which I had formerly been given by the boy (who had thrown bricks upon him), the king as soon as he was aware (of this fact) sent some policemen to catch me and from midnight to the day-light (my host) said to the king that I belonged to another religion and was not a Mongol. But he did not listen to him. Then the others having relinquished my protector, my protector said: "It is better

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124 Varipur down below: Varipur is a corruption for Avantipur; this statement anyhow is not exact, because saffron-fields are to be found only near Pampur.

125 Vijayajeśvara now Bij-behāra, Bijbiara.

126 Bhūmiśila?

127 The Kālacakra is still considered in Tibet as one of the most difficult Tantric systems.

128 This is the commentary upon the Kālacakrā; it is being edited by my pupil Doctor M. Carelli and myself in the Gaekwad's Oriental Series [= Carelli 1941].

to escape." Then, wearing Kashmiri dress we went to a ford of a big river, (but we found there) a group of about thirty Indian guards who said: "The men whom we want are here," caught hold of us, and took off our dress. We asked: "What will be done to us?" "You will be led to the presence of the king and killed; until that, there is nothing to do." – "If we are to be killed before the king, we should be happy to die here."

Then turning downwards we laid the head on the crossed arms and slept; (then they said: "While they stay here, let us go to eat") and they went away.

We ran away very quickly without touching as it were the earth; but, since a great wind-storm arose, even our traces were not visible. Then, restraining our breath, we went to a river which was running very slowly and with great facility without sinking as it were in the water, we reached the other shore. That day we stayed with some young shepherds who happened to be there and in the night we slept in a heap of grass; in the morning we went for alms and somebody gave us some worn clothes.

From that place after one month to the east
We went to Varipur steadfast throne of Kashmir;
in its fields the saffron grows
but I did not carry away even a pistil of that flower.

When we reached a pass on the way from Kashmir among a crowd of women wearing furred coats, there walked about five hundred women who had the hair loose on the back. They asked, "Wherefrom do you come? Whereto are you going?" I replied: "We come from Urgyan and go to sBud bkra."[129] "O great man, your enterprise is fulfilled." So they said, and suddenly disappeared. Afterwards the mK'an po bsGrub rin asked me if those women were ḍākinī of that time, and I agreed thṅt they looked so.

Then we reached Jālandhara and after a few days some Kashmiri merchants happened to be there, and asked us: "Where do you come from?" "We are Tibetan monks gone on pilgrimage to Urgyan. On the way back we came to Kashmir and your king (wanted to) kill us both." They looked astonished and said: "Perhaps you are a *siddha*. When the king sent some men to catch you, a kind of rainbow in the sky gradually vanished." Greatly astonished they made me great honour and many offerings and I began

129 The residence of rGod ts'aṅ pa.

to be famous even in Jālandhara as a monk from Tibet who had gone on pilgrimage to Urgyan and had got there miraculous powers.

Then we went to Maryul.[130]

1.1.2 Travels of sTag ts'aṅ ras pa

(2, a) Even sTag ts'aṅ ras pa starts from Tise and through Myaṅ po ri rdsoṅ[131] and Pretapuri, a day's journey only from that place,[132] enters the province of Žaṅ žuṅ in Guge[133] - (Žaṅ žuṅ gi yul Gu ge[134]). He then reaches K'yuṅ luṅ[135] and after five days he halts at the bottom of the Sarang la.[136] 5a Having crossed this pass, he enters the narrow valley (*roṅ*) of Ku nu and through rNam rgyal,[137] Pu, Sa, he arrives after two days at So raṅ and then sets out to K'yags;[138] in five days he reaches Su ge t'aṅ[139] and after three days more Dsva la mu khe. In the proximity, there is a warm rock which is said to have been the meditation-hut of Nāgārjuna (2, b). Then in one day, the pilgrim reaches Dsalandhara – one of the twenty-four limbs of the *vajrakāya*; it is also, called by the Indians Kaṅkarkoṭ and by the Tibetans Nagarkoṭ (2, b).

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130 The short-way for going to Maryul (Ladakh) would have been to cross the Zoji la; I cannot understand why they took the long way to Kangra and Lāhul.

131 Myaṅ po ri rdsoṅ is in the proximity of Dulchu gompa.

132 Pretapuri is the same as Tirthapuri (see above p. 84). In the *dkar c'ag* or *mâhâtmya* of the monastery the name is mis-spelt as gNas tre bsta puri, an evident corruption of Tirthapuri through the colloquial Tretapuri. This mâhâtmya is preserved in the monastery and its title is*: gNas tre bsta puri gyi gnas yigs* (= yig) *dkar c'ag* (ms. c'ags) *gsal bai me loṅ* (ms. loṅs). Pretapuri seems to be the original name since Pretapuri is included in the list of 24 places presided over by the 24 Vīras. See G. Tucci, *Indo Tibetica* III, Part II, p. 42 *Padma Taṅ yig*, Ch. V. The place was named Pretapuri perhaps on account of the hot springs of sulphur which are to be found there and were considered as being connected with chthonian deities. On Pretapuri, Tirthapuri see G. Tucci, *Santi e Briganti nel Tibet ignoto*, p. 120.

133 That points to Palkye where vast ruins are still to be seen. See G. Tucci, *Santi e Briganti*, p. 132.

134 On the relation between Žaṅ žuṅ and Guge, see above p. 85.

135 K'yuṅ luṅ (the valley of Garuḍa) as I stated in the above work was a very big town, still considered by the Bonpos as one of their holiest places: mŇul mk'ar "the silver castle" of K'yuṅ is still invoked in the prayers of the Bonpos.

136 I hardly think that the distance between K'yuṅ luṅ and the Sarang la can be covered in five days.

137 rNam rgyal is Namgyal of the maps at the bottom of the Shipki pass on the Indian side.

138 Pu is of course Poo of the maps and Sa is Sasu between Poo and Kanam. So raṅ is Sarahan, the summer residence of the rājas of Bashahr; perhaps K'yags is the same as rGya sKyags of Orgyan pa. See above p. 107.

139 Suge t'an is, I think, Suket.

To the East of this place there is a temple in the shape of a *stūpa* in whose interior one can see a stone image to a helmet: it is called Mahādurkha[140] and it is said to be the abode of the goddess rDo rje p'ag mo. On the four sides there are four holes for the four magic *karma*: to the North there is a place for bloody sacrifices (*dmar mc'od*).

Even sTag ts'aṅ ras pa refers to a practice of the Hindu pilgrims mentioned by early Persian and European travellers: that on the eastern side people used to cut their tongues believing that it would grow again within three days.[141]

Then, to the South of this place, sTag ts'aṅ ras pa went to Laṅgura[142] one of the eight cemeteries with its peculiar tree; people used to offer bloody sacrifices to a Nāgavṛkṣa (*gesar*) which grows there. Not very far, there is a cave where the Tibetan ascetic rGod ts'aṅ pa spent some time in meditation. Tibetan pilgrims use to reside there: in the first month of the year, on the occasion of the holiday which commemorates the miraculous exhibitions of the Buddha all believers (*naṅ pa*)[143] of India assemble in the place and make offering.

During the festival-ceremony after the new moon *yogins (dso ki), sannyāsins, (se ña si)* and Tibetan pilgrims perform their worship without distinction in the royal palace. In a piece of land between two rivers, flowing in that cemetery, there is a boulder, looking like a skull, where one can see quite clearly the image of rNal ḥbyor ma.[144] sTag ts'aṅ ras pa could not accept the local tradition which saw in the stone the miraculous image of Gaṇapati with the elephant's trunk (3, a). To the North of this place there is a hillock called Kha' nu ma otre.

The king of Kaṅkarkot, which is a very pleasant and fertile country and inhabited by a good-looking people, is a believer; in his family there has been an incarnation of a K'or lo sdom pa,[145] therefore, in the country there are many *sannyāsins* and *yogins*.

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140 Mahādurgā.

141 For European and Indian references on this subject, see J. Hutchinson and J.Ph. Vogel, *History of the Panjab Hill States*, Vol. I, p. 110.

142 On this cemetery, see above pp. 90-91.

143 For sTag ts'aṅ the word "believers" seems to include not only the Buddhists but also the Hindus as opposed to the Mohammedans.

144 *Viz. Yoginī*, in this case Vajravārāhi.

145 *Viz.* of Cakra-Saṃvara. On this Tantric cycle see G. Tucci, *Indo-Tibetica*, Vol. III, Part II, p. 17.

One day to the west of Kaṅ gar koṭ, there is Nurup'u; then the itinerary of the pilgrim runs through Ṡrīnagara, Paṭhanna, Nosara, Kathunara, Pa ru rda, Paṭhanmusur, Sakiri, Salau, Bhets'arbhura,[146] Salakau ṭhu, So ṭa ko ṭa, Gho tso ra ka; within two days from this place he reached Ba la na ga ra ti la, the residence of many *yogins*. On the southern side of a hill in its proximity one can see upon the rock the very clear miraculous image of Orgyan. That is also the place where two famous *yogins* Dsin ta pīr[147] and Dsāpir disappeared into the earth.

Then he went to Kashmir of which he gives a general description very similar to that found in the Lam yig of Orgyan pa; to the west, in a piece of land between two rivers, there is Rva me śva ra[148] which corresponds to the eyebrows of the *vajrakāya*. To the East there is the *stūpa* of Paṅ pure[149] in the middle of a lake. That *stūpa* was erected in order to commemorate the miracle of the arhat Ñi ma guṅ pa who, sitting in meditation, overpowered the *nāgas* who wanted to disturb him; the fierce winds which they roused were unable to move even the border of his clothes, and the weapons they threw upon him turned into flowers; being unsuccessful in their attempts, they requested him to ask for whatever he wanted and he replied that he desired as much ground as was necessary for him to sit in *vajraparyaṅka* (3, b). So all the lake dried up and in the surface which thus emerged there is a town with three million and six hundred inhabitants.[150] There is also a grove, the Kashmirian residence of Nāropā.

The capital of Kashmir is a big town called Na ga ra:[151] there is a temple of the unbelievers called Bha ro ma tsi[152] which is adorned by four hundred

146 Some places can be identified: Nurup'u is Nurpur, Pathanna perhaps corresponds to Pathankot, Kaṭhuhara is Kathua, Salau may correspond to Salathian; anyhow it is clear that śTag ts'aṅ went from Nurpur to Jammu and from there proceeded to Kashmir.

147 These two names seem to be mis-spelt, at least it is difficult to recognize the original form of them: the name "pir" though specially used for Mohammedan saints is also occasionally applied to Indian Sādhus.

148 See above p. 120.

149 *Viz.* Pampur.

150 On this legend and its source see J.Ph. Vogel, *Indian Serpent-lore*, pp. 233-235.

151 Abbreviation for Śrīnagara.

152 This is the Boromasjid.

pillars. In Palhar sgaṅ[153] there is an image of sGrol ma inside a well. To the East there is a hill called śTagsilima[154] said to be Gru dsin.[155]

Then in one day the pilgrim reached Puspahari[156] where he stopped for seven days (4, b). Then, leaving in Kashmir his three companions suffering from fever and anxious to go back, he went to see the rock Senta[157] from where waters runs from the fifteenth day of the fourteenth lunar mansion up to the fifteenth day of the eighteenth lunar mansion. This place corresponds to the fingers of the *vajrakāya* and was still in the hands of the believers.

Returning to his friends who were run down by disease he went along with them to Varan[158] but on the way to Maṭe[159] one of his companions died and another, Grags pa rgya mt'so by name, passed away in Maṭe. So only Draṅ po bzaṅ po was left (5, a). They spent there three days and went up to a high pass.[160] śTag ts'aṅ halted in the evening on the top, but since his companion did not arrive, on the following day, he returned back thinking that either he had died or was unable to proceed; he met him near half-way below the pass, but on that day it was impossible to go any farther on account of the snow which fell heavily; next day, they started and crossed the pass with great difficulty and having recourse (5, b) to some yoga practices after fifteen days reached the Tibetan Zaṅs dkar where they met the great Siddha dDe ba rgya mts'o who invited them to spend some time in retreat in the place where he used to meditate. Behind it, there is the magic shield[161] of Nāropā; they spent two months in that place. Then, when their companions arrived from Nagarkoṭ, intending to go to Ga śa, [162] the place of the ḍākinīns, they went to ḥBar gdan[163] and from there, having

153 I cannot identify Pa lhar sgaṅ; I suppose that it is to be identified with the Pārvati hill.

154 Takht-i-Suleiman.

155 Potala, the abode of Avolokiteśvara.

156 Also called in the Tibetan biographies of Nāropā, Marpa and Milairaspa: Phulahari: "mountain of flowers." In these older books this place seems to be located not in Kashmir but near Nālandā.

157 This spring is sacred to the Goddess Saṃdhyā and is called now Sundbrar. M.A. Stein, *Kalhana's Rajatarangini: A Chronicle of the Kings of Kashmir* II, p. 469. "The spring of Saṃdhyā derives its fame as well as its appellation from the fact that for uncertain periods in the early summer it flows or is supposed to flow, intermittently, three times in the day and three times in the night."

158 Unidentified.

159 I suppose *Mutti* on the river Brinvar.

160 Perhaps the Shilsar Pass.

161 The text has: p'ub, but I think there is a mistake, exact reading being: p'ug "cave."

162 Ga śā = Garśa, the usual Tibetan name for Lāhul.

163 This is perhaps, Padam, the chief village of Zaṅsdkar, though in the Chronicles edited by A.H.

taken leave from bDe ba rgya mts'o and his disciples, they reached Ga śa. The king of this place Ts'e riṅ dpal lde[164] rendered service to them for three months. Then in K'aṅ gsar[165] they were attended upon by the younger sister of the king with her son; she was called bSod nams. They explained various doctrines, such as the mahāmudra, the six laws of Nāropā, [166] the Prāṇayoga, the law of the karmic connection, the esoteric methods, the teachings of Mar pa, Mi la ras pa, and Dvags po[167] rje, the story of the law, [168] the Maṇi bka' ḥbum[169] etc. They also visited the places near Lāhul, such as Gandhola, Gusa maṇḍala [Gusamaṇḍala],[170] Re p'ag, and Maru corresponding to the toes of the *vajrakāya*.[171] In winter they sat in retreat for six months in gYur rdsoṅ. Then, for two months they went to Dar rte,[172] where was the king. Altogether, they spent an entire year in Ga śa. After that, while his companions remained there, he went with a single monk from Dar rtse to K'aṅ gsar, sKye naṅ,[173] Gusamaṇḍala where begins the country of Kuluṭa corresponding to the knees of the *vajrakāya*; then, in two days, he reached Re p'ag where there is the image of sPyaṅ ras gzis in the form of ḥGro drug sgrol ye śes.[174] The image is made in stone from Kamaru.[175] Then, in one day, to Maru, in two days to Pata; then to the bottom of the Ko ṭa la pass; having crossed the pass full of snow he reached Paṅgi and then Sura and after two days Na raṅ. This country is called Ka ma ru and corresponds to the armpits of the *vajrakāya*. Having crossed another high pass, he reached in two days the narrow valley of Tsaṃ bhe

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Francke [1926] the name of this place is spelt: p. 164 Dpal ldem (p. 166 dPa gtum).

164 This king is to be identified with Ts'e riṅ rgyal po brother (*Chronicles of Tinan*, A.H. Francke, ibid, p. 212 [see Id. 1907]) or son (*Genealogical Tree of the Chiefs of Tinan*, ibid, p. 216) of bSod nams rgya mts'o = perhaps the same as Ts'e riṅ se grub of the document referred to *ibid* at p. 218 (about 1569 CE).

165 On the left bank of the Bhaga river.

166 *Viz.* the "Nâropāi c'os drug", the fundamental book of the bKa'rgyud pa and the guide of their haṭhayoga practices.

167 This is the *sampradâya* of the first masters of the bKa'brgyud pa sect.

168 *C'os ḥbyuṅ*. This is the general name for any history of the holy doctrines.

169 The famous work attributed to Sron btsan sgam po.

170 Gus on the Chandra River.

171 See above p. 86.

172 The first village to be met when entering Lahul after crossing the Borolacha Pass.

173 *Viz.* Ti naṅ.

174 See J. Schubert, in *Artibus Asiae* vol. III.

175 The high valley of the Chandrabhāgā.

dam pa,[176] which he traversed in seven days. Then he found himself in Hindutam.[177] The itinerary then runs through: Nurup'u, rīnagara, Paṭhaṇṇa Nosara Kaṭhuhar, Pāturar, Pathanmosur, Sakiri Salau, Bhetsarbhura Salakauṭhu, Sauṭa, Kauṭa, Ghotsoraka[178] in whose proximity a big river, coming from Kashmir runs to the South. Since in the itinerary of Orgyan pa it was stated that on the other side of this river there is a place called Vara mila he (7, a) marched for four days towards the South, but could not find that place. His companion Žǐ ba rnam rgyal lost any faith in the itineraries and advised him to return. But he did not listen to him and went to the North-West; after fifteen days through a desert country he reached a place called Hila. He asked there for the town called in the itinerary of Orgyan pa Hora and said to have 700,000 inhabitants; nobody could tell him anything about it. Nor had he better results when he enquired about the mountain of mineral salt called Baṅhoṭi. They said anyhow that there were many places where one could find mines of mineral salt the nearest being those of Tsośara; having traversed for three days a desert country they reached Muraga[179]. There they forded a big river and after three days more they reached Tsośara. It is a valley stretching from North-West – where it is very high – to the South-East where it is low. On its northern side there are many ravines facing south where there is mineral salt in the shape of rocks. To the South of this place there is the big country of Dhagan and that of Dsamola[180] where there are many believers and many sects of monks. They come to take salt there from Nagarkoṭ up to Lahor and Abher, on the other side, up to Gorsala[181] and Ghoṭhaiasakaṃ. In the old itineraries it is written that the salt of this place goes as far as Orgyan; but at the time of the author this commerce had stopped; anyhow even in Orgyan there is mineral salt of blue colour like crystal. From Tsośara (6, b), he went to Dhodhośna, and Vavula, then, after two days to Maloṭṭa, [182] where there is a temple founded by king Hula ruined by the soldiers of the Mugal. In the itinerary of Orgyan pa it is stated that to the North-West of this place there is Rukāla, but nobody could give any information about this town. Anyhow

176 *Viz*. Chambâ.

177 Hindutam, mis-spelling for Hindustan.

178 See above.

179 The river is of course the Jhelum; Muraga is perhaps Mulakwal. Tsosara is to be located in the proximity of the Chuil hill.

180 Dhagan is Dekhan, and Dsamola is the Tamil Country (Dramiḍa. Dramila).

181 Perhaps Gujarath.

182 Maloṭṭa is Malot: see above.

marching towards north-west, they met some Turks who were salt traders; he enquired from them about Rukāla, but they replied that the place beyond was desert and full of brigands who were likely to kill them. They could give no information about the road. Proceeding farther, they had a narrow escape from five or six salt diggers who wanted to kill them; the next day (8, a), they turned back but lost the way, went to the East and after some time they met some salt-traders; among them there was an old Brahmin who became a friend of the Tibetan pilgrims. These went along with the caravan until, after nine days, they met a salt-lake[183] on whose shore there was a large pasture-land. The pilgrim confesses to have forgotten the name of this lake. The merchants there carried their trade of salt and butter and then went away with the younger brother of the Brahmin, śTag ts'aṅ resumed the march and after three days arrived at Rukāla;[184] then they went to Akkithial, Bhahupur, Mālapur, Uts'alapur, Sapunpur, Reureṭ, Aṭike[185] in front of which runs the Seṅ ge k'a ḥbab. Crossing this river there is a place called Ma ts'il ka natha tril; then there is Pora, Nośara,[186] Mataṅgana, Miṭhapāṇi. It is a spring which has a salt taste and it is said to be derived from the urine of Padmasambhava. They went farther on along with that old Brahmin, three *yogins* and a householder, Atumi by name (8, b). After having been detained by a man called Tsadulhayi[187] who expressed the desire to accompany them but delayed the departure on account of some clothes that he had to wash or of the bad weather, they started again on the journey; but the old Brahmin left them and returned (9, a). The itinerary of s'Tag ts'aṅ runs then through Mādha, Atsimi, Pakśili,[188] Dhaṃdhori, Kīṭuhar, Bhaṭhurvar Paṭhapaṃge, Mutadni, Kapola, Kandhahar, Hasonagar.

Then, they forded a river and resumed the journey through Paruka, Nasbhala, Sik'ir. Proceeding farther for half a day they met about sixteen brigands who boasted to be from Kapur, *viz.,* from Orgyan. They hit the pilgrim on the head, cut his hair, took off his clothes and then sold him

183 This is the saltlake near Kallar Kahār. It took our pilgrim so many days before reaching this place because, we are told, he went astray.

184 As I stated before (p. 110) I supposed that Rukāla is the same as Rupwal. As to the names which follow, if the identification Rukāla-Rupwal is exact, Bhahūpur might be Bakhuwala to the North of Khaur, Malapur, is perhaps a mis-spelling for Kamalpur and Utsalpur seems to correspond to Uchar (to the South of Campbellpur).

185 Atike must be Attok: this identification is sure on account of the Seṅ ge k'a ḥbab said in our text to be flowing near that place. The Seṅ ge k'a ḥbab is the Tibetan name for the Indus.

186 Of all these places Nosara can certainly be identified with Nowshera. Pora is perhaps a corruption of Piran.

187 Perhaps a Mohammedan name: Shahidullah.

188 Pakiśli perhaps is Bakshali in which case Madha could be identified with Mardān.

as a slave, for some silver *taṅk'as* and some *payesa* to two brothers. After having met another group of six brigands and still another brigand and paid the ransom, in the evening he reached with his proprietors Momolavajra (9, b). He was given some work to do, but at the fourth part of the day (*t'un*) he began reciting the prayers loudly. The old father of the house in a fit of rage, hit him twice on the head so that he lost consciousness, but he recovered after having recourse to some *yoga* practices and to the meditation on his *guru*. He escaped and arrived at a place called Sithar where he was caught again by the people. He told a Brahmin who happened to be there that he was a Tibetan not from Kashmir but from Mahā cīna; with his help he was released and at the suggestion of that same Brahmin he went to Bhayasahura where he met many *yogins*. The chief of them was called Buddhanātha. He was received by them with great joy and was given the name of Šamonātha (11, b). Those ascetics had holes in the ears and were called Muṇḍa. Living near Guru Jñānanātha sTag ts'aṅ learnt many doctrines of the *yogins*, such as Gurganātha.[189] During his stay in that place he could assist in some wrestling performances in great fashion in that town. There was there a famous wrestler who was challenged one day by a Turkish officer who boasted to be very clever in that very art. This Turk began fighting, but was easily overcome by the other who though often requested by his badly injured rival to stop fighting, did not cease until that officer was killed. In the proximity, there is one of the eight cemeteries, *viz.,* that called Ts'an 'ur 'ur sgrogs pa where there is a thick wood. Both believers and unbelievers carry there their corpses, the believers to burn them and the unbelievers to bury them. They go there for secret practices and in the night one can see corpses rising from the soil; there are also many ḍākinīs black, naked, carrying in their hands human hearts or intestines and emanating fire from their secret parts. In this place there are also performances. They fight one with a shield and another with a sword. If one breaks the shield that is all right; otherwise even if he is wounded or dies it is considered to be a shame (12, a). In that place in the first month of the year on the occasion of the big holiday which commemorates the great miracle of Buddha there is a great *melā* where many *yogins* and *sannyāsin*s meet. They told him that he would have seen a great *yogin* hailing from Orgyan (13, a). In fact, he met him and he was astonished to see that he knew everything about his having been captured by the bandits, etc.

This *yogin* told him that he was bound for Hasonagar but that he would return within ten days to take him to Orgyan. Therefore, sTag ts'aṅ ras pa waited in Bhyasahura for ten days; then, since the *yogin* did not come

189 I cannot find the origin of Samonātha: is it Śambhunātha? Gurganātha is Gorakṣanātha.

back, he decided to start alone. The *yogins* assembled in Bhyasahura and the great Pir Buddhanātha advised him to go wherever he liked either to Dhagan or to Hindutam or to Lahor save Orgyan; there were there too many Paṭhans who would have killed him (13, b). So he requested them to show him the way to Hindutam, but in fact he went to Hasonagar where he enquired about the *yogin* from Orgyan who was called Pālanātha and succeeded in finding him. That Pālanātha was a Paṭhan by birth who after having been an unbeliever became converted and spent many years in Orgyan. Then they joined a party of traders and went along with them upwards. They crossed a small river and then, through Paruba, Nyapala, Apuka, Killitila, Sikir,[190] Momolavajra, Sinora, Pelahar, Muṭhilli, Muṣamli, Muṭhikśi, Mahātilli, Satāhulda, Kalabhyatsi, Saṅgiladhuba, Gothaiaśakaṃ they arrived at a high pass; having crossed it, they arrived in the country of Orgyan. After three days they reached Dsomok'aṭi[191] where there is the palace of the king. This king was called Parts'agaya. He holds his sway over the 700,000 old towns of Orgyan. This king was an intimate friend of Pālanātha and therefore he gave them a guide who knew well the country. After five days they arrived at the mountain Yalom[192] pelom said to be one of the eight Śriparvatas to the Jambudvīpa. At its bottom there grows a medical herb called *jāti* and on its middle there are thick woods of white sandal. On the top there are fields of saffron. In their middle there is a tank, where the king Indrabhūti used to bathe and on the border of this tank there are many chapels beautifully carved and adorned with beams of red sandal. The top of this mountain is higher than the Himālayas. He resided there for seven days (14, a). In a desert valley near that mountain there are many wild animals and every sort of poisonous snakes. Then they went to the other side of the mountain (* 15. a), where there is a valley in the shape of a full-blown lotus with eight petals, stretching towards the South-West. After three days they arrived at K'arakśar;[193] then after five days at Rāyiśar [Rayik'ar].[194] Up to that point the custom of the people of Orgyan is like that of the Indians. But after that place it changes. Both men and women have a girth of jewels; this girth sometimes is in the shape of a snake of black colour, sometimes of a snake streaked. They wear a black hat of felt

190 But before Sik'ir.

191 Dsomok'aṭi is said, down below, to be the place where all rivers of Orgyan meet: and on his way back to Kashmir śTag t'saṅ went straight from that town to the Indus: from there he also starts for the mountain Ilam. I therefore think that Dsomok'aṭi is to be located in the Baranda valley.

192 Ilam mountain, on which see above p. 113.

193 Which seems to be the Karakār Pass.

194 Rājgiri.

in the shape of a toupet which is adorned with many jewels; the women wear a cap like that of Padmasambhava but without the hem. Both men and women wear earrings, bracelets and rings for the ankle made either of silver or of earth properly prepared. To the South-West side of this place there is the palace of Indrabhūti with nine stories (15, b). But at this time there were only the ruins.[195]

Not very far, to the North-West, there is the place where Padmasambhava was burnt; the soil turned into clay. But there is no trace of the lake spoken of in the biography of the saint. After three days' march to the North-West there is a big place called a Rahorbhyara. This place is so situated that it takes seven days from whatever part one wants to reach it either from the West or the East or the North or the South. In its middle there is the *vihāra* founded by king Indrabhūti the great and called Maṅgalahor.[196] It possesses one hundred pillars and still has many chapels. Specially worthy of notice is the chapel of Guhyasamāja with its *maṇḍala*. To the North-West of this locality there are many places, but there are no temples nor things worth seeing. Therefore, both śTag ts'aṅ ras pa and Pālanāha went back to Rāyiśar [Rayik'ar]. Behind that place there is a small river; they forded it and after one day they arrived at Oḍiyāna[197] (16, a); it was a big holiday corresponding to the tenth of the third month of the Buddhist calendar. All people were assembled and singing and dancing they drank all kinds of liquors without restriction. This place is the very core of Orgyan (16, b).

To the west of it there is a small temple where one can see the miraculous image of *yoginī* of red sandal. To the back of that temple there lives a *yoginī* Hudsunātha by name more than a thousand years old though she looks about twenty-six or twenty-seven. From that place one can see the mountain called Kamalabir[198] (17, a); its top is always covered by the splendour of the rainbow, but when the rainbow vanishes it looks like a helmet of silver. According to the Tantric literature this mountain is known as the *dharmagañia* (the treasury of the law) or the miraculous palace of Heruka. In front of it there is a cave which is the sacred cave of the Vajra; or according to the itinerary of Orgyan pa the magic cave of Labapa. All

195 Rāja Girā's Castle?

196 Manglawar: Rahorbhyara and Mangalahor seem therefore to be identified [*sic*], Mangalahor being the centre of the place. [In the 1971 edition of Tucci's *Travels*, fn. 196, Tucci mentions Mingora and not Manglawar: "Rahorbhyara and Mingora seem therefore to be identical or to be very near; in that case Rahorbhyara might be an ancient name for Saidu Sharif or any other village near Mingora". On this, see below 1.2.2].

197 Udegram [this identification is maintained in Tucci 1971; however it should be corrected with Butkara = Dhumat'ala, see below].

198 The same as the mountain: Kama'onka, Kamadhoka of Orgyan pa.

the Indians call it Hadsikalpa and it is the abode of K'otas.[199] Behind that mountain there is a lake known as the 'Sindhu-ocean' of Dhanakośa; in colloquial language the Indians call it Samudrasintu. It was distant only one day's journey; but Pālanātha told him that there was no need of going any farther, because behind the pass there was no place to be seen except the lake. To the South there is a small mountain where there is a spring called Maṅgalapāṇi or in colloquial: āyurpāṇi because it bestows immortality (18, a). Then, they went back and in two days they arrived at Oḍiyāna also called Dhumat'ala; then through Rāyiśar [Rayik'ar], Midora, K'aragśar, where there was a woman emitting fire from the mouth dancing and singing like a mad person whom nobody dared approach, Saṃdibhor, Kavoka, Bhyathabhasabhasor, Dsomok'aṭi was reached. The king at that time was in the ark where he kept all sorts of animals, such as Persian lions, boars, etc. under the supervision of special stewards. While Pālanātha remained with the king, śTag ts'aṅ went on his way for five days guided by a man appointed for this purpose by the king. He then forded the Sintupani. The itinerary then runs through Radsahura, after two days, Nīla, Kamṭhe, Nepale (19, a) Nila'u, Laṅka, Horaña, Asakamni, Mahātsindhe, Ghelaṃri after six days, Gorśala, then again after two days Kalpa, Rukāla, Rahorbuṇda, Ravata, Satā, Hati, Tsiru, Rutā,[200] Dselom, Sara, Bhebar, Nośara, Ratsuga. After three days he reached Lithanna, then crossed two passes and reached a narrow valley. Having then crossed another high pass called Pirbañtsa,[201] after two days he arrived in Kashmir where he went to pay a visit to the famous place Puśpahari in the lower part of which there are fields of saffron. In the proximity of these there is a bazar called Spaṅpor.[202] After having bathed in the spring of the rock called Sandha[203] he returned to Kashmir proper. At last, having crossed a pass, he arrived after two days at Varan; then he went to Mate and after ten days through a desert country he was in the Tibetan Zaṅsdkar. Finally, he reached Maryul received by the king and his ministers.[204]

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199 The meaning or the Sanskrit equivalent of this word is quite unknown to me.

200 From Rutā to Kashmir the route can easily be followed: it is the old route through the Pir Pañjal Pass, practically abandoned after the extension of the railway to Rawalpindi. Rutā is Rohtas; Dselom is Jhelum; Bhebar is Bimber; Nośara – Nowshera, Ratsuga – Rajaori.

201 Lithanna is perhaps Thannamang, Pirbañtsa is evidently Pir Pañjal.

202 Probably Pampur.

203 Cf. above note 157.

204 [In Tucci 1971 after this paragraph there is a concluding one in which, among other things, the identification of Dhumat'ala with Mingora/Butkara and of Rayik'ar with Raja Gira/Udegram is established].

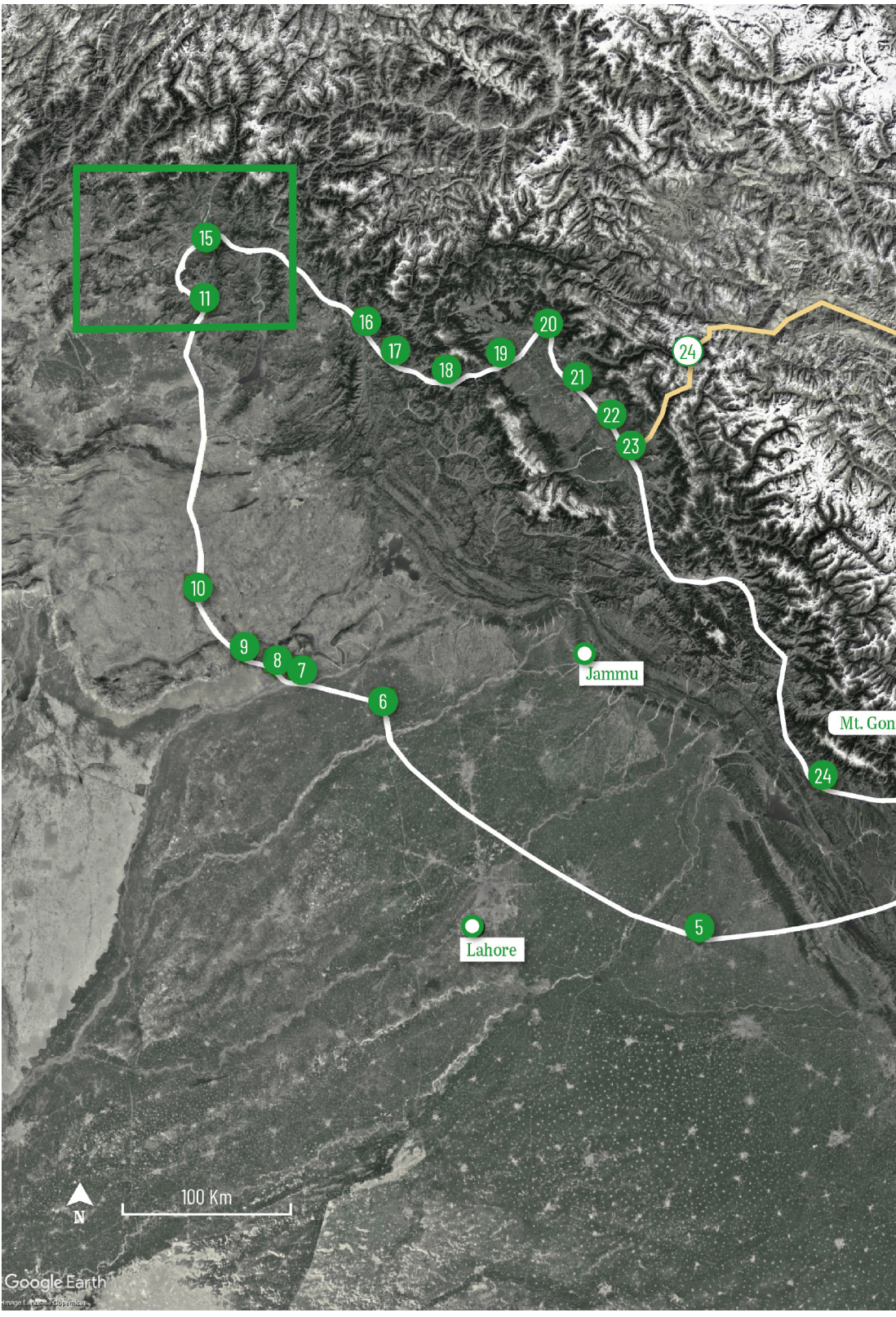
Maps of the Tibetan Pilgrimage Routes to Uḍḍiyāna

based on the itinerary of Orgyan pa

The names in brackets are the names we use today, and the former ones are suggested either in the text or by Tucci in the footnote.

One noticeable issue: in the text, 16 (Tsi k'ro ta) was reached after 17 (Ghari) and 18 (Urśar), however in the actual map Tsi k'ro ta (Mozufferabad) is no doubt located in the northwest of 17 and 18, it is unlikely that the pilgrims reached first Ghari and Urśar, and then to Tsi k'ro ta.

1. Ti se (Mt. Kailash)
2. Ma pham (Manosarovar)
3. Kuluta (Kulu)
4. Maru (Mandi)
5. Jālandhara (Jalandhar)
6. Sila (Helān)
7. Brahora/Brahola (Pindi Dadan Khan)
8. Nacutri/Naugiri (Khewra)
9. Malo'o/Malakoṭe (Malot)
10. Rukala (Rupwal)
11. Bhonele (Buner)
12. K'aragk'ar (Karākar Pass/Barikot)
13. Rayik'ar (Raja Gira/Udegram)
14. Dhumat'ala (Butkara)
15. Mangala'or (Manglawar)
16. Tsi k'ro ta (Mozufferabad)
17. Ghari
18. Urśar (Uri)
19. rDorjemula/rDorje mūla (Varāhamula/Baramulla)
20. Kamapara (Wular Lake)
21. Śrīnagara
22. Vatipur (Avantipur)
23. Bhejibhara (Bij-behāra/Bijbiara)
24. Kangra (Assumed). Zoji la Pass
25. Maryul (Ladakh)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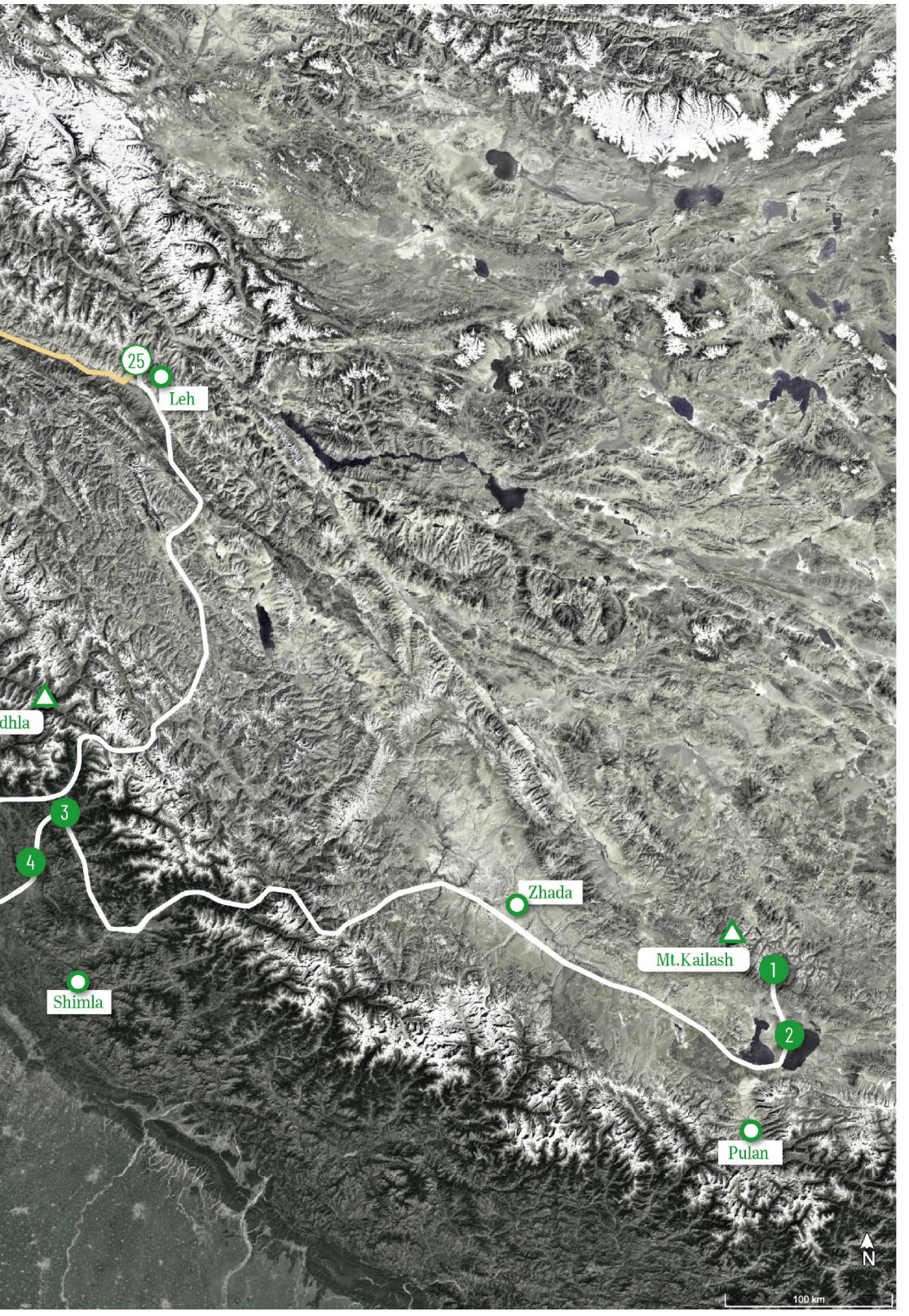
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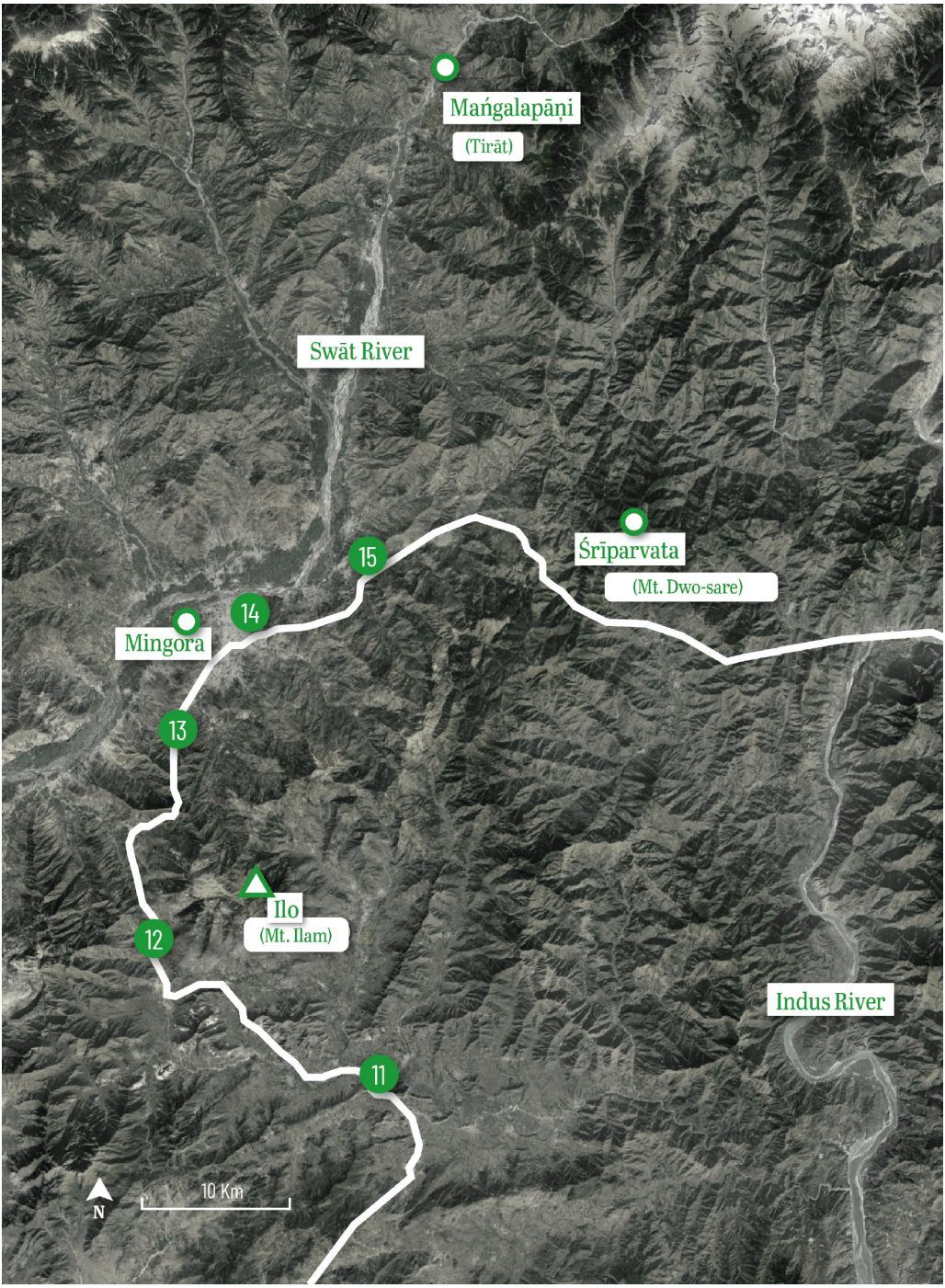
Maṅgalapāṇi
(Tirāt)
Swāt River
Śrīparvata
(Mt. Dwo-sare)
15
14
Mingora
13
Ilo
(Mt. Ilam)
12
Indus River
11
N
10 Km

1.2 The Itinerary of Orgyan pa (ca. 1230-1293)

Note by Luca Maria Olivieri

These notes partially update the second edition of Travels (Tucci 1971), which differs from the 1940 edition in some geographical identifications, notably the identification of Dhumat'ala with Mingora/Butkara and Rayik'ar with Raja Gira/Udegram.

The travel of Orgyan pa to Uddiyana (Uḍḍīyāna) should have taken place between 1260 and 1283 according to the reconstruction of his biography (see above 1.1). Tucci recovered and translated a large portion of Orgyan pa's travelogue, but focused mostly on the final part of his outbound trip, the one related to Swāt. Quite recently, the description of the previous stretch of his journey in the Kulu-Lahul-Chamba valleys (Himachal Pradesh) was studied and published by V. Widorn in a very detailed study on the ancient geography of the area (Id. 2015). It seems that the journey was a quite miraculous one and extremely fast (ibid.: 207). Probably he reached the Punjab plain either through the Ravi or the Chenab valleys. The first route might have been the best way out of the Kulu-Lahul-Chamba according to the 13th century ancient geography (compare figs. 7.2 and 7.3 in Widorn 2015).

Eventually, we find Orgyan pa traveling towards West/South-West, crossing the Jhelum and heading to Malakoṭe (modern Malot) in the Salt Range (see p. 109, fn 78). Then he moved toward North-West and, before crossing the Indus, he reached Rajahura/Rajapura, one of the four gateways to Uḍḍiyāna. The other three gates cannot be identified with certainty except for Nila that can be located on the upper Soan River (see p. 110, fn 84).[1]

1 The toponym can be related to the River Neelam, which flows from Kashmir to Jehlum. This Note is

1.2.1 Approaching Uḍḍiyāna

This point however demonstrates that the borders of the region that in antiquity was referred to as Uḍḍiyāna do not overlap exactly with the geographical limits of the Swāt Valley. Uḍḍiyāna was a large dominion that included the following modern districts of Pakistan: part of Abbottabad (if Nila is that Nila), Manshera (up to Besham), Swabi, Buner, Shangla and beyond (see also Widorn 2015: fn. 1). The core of Uḍḍiyāna should be found in Swāt, or better at Dhumat 'ala, as in Orgyan pa's travelog is said that "no other place except Dhumat 'ala is [specifically] called Urgyan" (see above p. 91).

Orgyan pa crossed the Indus probably near Hund and from that point on he believed that he had entered in Uḍḍiyāna. First, he stopped outside a town called Kalabur/Kalapur and then (at this point the text is unclear) in one day he reached the town of Kaboko, whose chief Rajadeva was "the master of the greatest part of Urgyan" (see above p. 92). It should be noted that, in Tucci's translation, Orgyan pa does not use the term king as he did for the queens of Malakoṭe and Rukala. The term "master" can be explained in light of the statement he makes later in the account: "At that time Urgyan had been just conquered by the Turks [Hor]" (see above p. 91), or in any case was under Muslim rule (Tucci 1977[2]: 227) (see below). Rajadeva, certainly a Hindu aristocrat, was not the king of Kaboko, rather the administrator or the "master" of the territory. Kaboko should be searched about 1 walking day N-NW of the area of Hund, *i.e.*, in Swabi or the lower Buner districts. With the help of a guide bearing a letter signed by Rajadeva (certainly a laissez-passer for the Hor), O rgyan pa crossed Bhonele (Buner) going North-West and reached K' aragk' ar (Karakar) where was a boundary limit. Judging from the description that follows, it seems that he had the Karakar pass as a point of reference.

From this point the two editions of Travels diverge, as in 1971 Tucci had much more information at his disposal. Rayik' ar is identified with Raja Gira, and Dhumat' ala with Butkara (see also Tucci 1977).

From there (*i.e.*, to the North) Orgyan pa saw the green and lavish valley of River Kodambhar, which should be the ancient name of the Karakar River, and to the East the Ilo (Ilam) "the foremost of all mountains of the Jambudvīpa", with its richness of medical herbs, grapes, antelops, flowers, etc. (see above p. 93). From the Karakar pass he reached Rayik' ar "which is said to have been the capital of King Indrabhote [Indrabhūti]. Now it is

based on the text published in Olivieri 2017

divided into two towns: in one there are about sixty houses, in the other about forty" (see above p. 93). It is possible that Rayik' ar is Raja Gira, and the two towns were the nearby twin villages of Udegram and Gogdara (ibid.; see also Bagnera 2015: 55-57).

Strangely though, neither Orgyan pa nor the other Tibetan travellers (who left less precise and detailed reports though) make any mention of what is slightly later reported in a celebrated Tibetan text of the 15th century (*deb-ther sngon-po* or *The Blue Annals*). There, Buddha himself gives a prophecy on king Indrabhūti, whose seat was located "In the northern quarter, in Śrī-Vajrasthāna [Vajirasthāna], Oḍḍīyāna" (Roerich 1949, 361). Śrī-Vajrasthāna is certainly Barikot, whose medieval name was Vajirasthāna (see below 1.3). Vajrasthāna/Barikot, an older centre of Buddhist cult, remained as such even when it was already in the hands of Ghaznavid soldiers, as attested by the discovery of complete *tsatsa*s, certainly left there by Vajrayana pilgrims (Olivieri and Minardi 2023). The name Vajirasthāna continues to be used for that important control center mentioned in the sources of the Ghaznavid and Ghurid periods (Wajīrastān/ Wajīra; see Olivieri and Sesana 2023), which according to our research was located at Barikot, and precisely on the acropolis of the city, where a late fortification (1100-1300 CE) has been documented.

We therefore have all the elements to establish that Barikot was not only an active military and administrative center at the time, but also a site with a venerable tradition amongst Buddhists. Why then the omission of Vajrasthāna/Vajirasthāna, i.e. Barikot, in Orgyan pa? The explanation for this lies in the route he chose; from the Karakar pass, he proceeded North-East following an ancient mountain track, still in use today and quite comfortable up to Udegram/Gogdara. We can also add that the traveler might also have been a little reluctant to pass near military centers controlled by the "Hor". He therefore did not descend into the Karakar valley until Barikot. In addition to that, it should be kept in mind that Orgyan pa should have arrived in Swāt in spring (the blossoming described on the Karakar pass is clear evidence of this), when the course of the Swāt River is at its maximum water regime. We know from archaeological evidence and the narratives contained in local folklore that Barikot even in pre-modern times, due to the higher water regime, was enclosed by water on three sides at certain times of the year, especially in spring. The Swāt riverside route, which today can be travelled all year round, was in the past only used during low water periods; for example, in autumn, when Alexander's army travelled it. After Barikot, continuing towards Udegram and Mingora, the riverside route is interrupted by the Manyar cliff, which, in ancient times,

could only be negotiated during low water periods. The same situation occurs further upstream between Mingora and Manglawar, because of the Faizagat cliff. In fact, even in 1926 Aurel Stein (Stein 1930), in order to reach Manglawar from Mingora in spring, had to follow the mountain route that bypassed that cliff from upstream (see also Raverty 1862: 236).

Therefore, it is possible that Orgyan pa followed the easy mountain track that reaches Raja Gira from Karakar via Sarbab. From there he must have stepped down to the Saidu valley and Dhumat 'ala, simply crossing the Raja Gira ridge in the East direction. In fact, according to his travelog, after Rayik' ar, the pilgrim visited Dhumat 'ala, the holiest place of Uḍḍiyāna, "the core of the miraculous country of Urgyan", the real target of his trip, which, in fact, was specifically mentioned in the *lassez-passaire* of Rajadeva.[2] Dhumat 'ala, 5-7 km North-North-East of Rayik' ar, has been identified by Tucci with T'a lo/ T'a lo (= d'ala, Dhara/Dara) *i.e.*, Butkara I (Tucci 1940[3]: 29, fn. 103; Id. 1958[2]: 65, 78, fn. 12; Id. 1977[2]: 177, 227, fn. 19), the great Buddhist urban sanctuary excavated by D. Faccenna. Butkara I was founded in the 3rd century BCE, and its last living phase is dated to the 10th century CE (Faccenna 1980-1981).

If Dhumat 'ala is Butkara, all the other sites mentioned by Orgyan pa can be located with a certain degree of certainty. The snow mountain of Kama' onka/Kamadhoka might be Mt. Mankyal (5,710 m ASL); Śrīparvata mountain can be identified with the Dwo-sare; Kapalabhojon/Maṅgalapāṇi with its sacred tree and spring can be Tirat (see above; Stein 1930: 56, fig. 41; Tucci 1958[2]: 86; Id. 1977[2]: 217-218, fn. 78; Filigenzi 2015: 25).[3]

The most interesting and furthermost place visited by Orgyan pa in Swāt/Uḍḍiyāna was Mangala' or, (Manglaor/Manglawar) to the North of Rayik' ar, "[where] is a temple founded by King Indrabhote [Indrabhūti] [and] where there are various images in stone of Buddha (Munīndra), Tārā and Lokeśvara" (see above p. 93).[4]

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2 Before reaching Rayik' ar, the pilgrim had to ford a small river running to the South (?). Near Rayik' ar there was a place inhabited by P'ra men ma (= Prang-tangai, South-East of Rayik' ar?). Cf. Pashto: Prang "tiger").

3 From Tirat comes the rock Buddhapada now in the Swāt Museum (Tucci 1958: fig. 9). Again, on Tirat, it is interesting to note that just opposite it, on the left bank of the River Swāt, at Jare, lies a colossal rock-relief representing Avalokitesvara/Padmāpaṇi (Olivieri 2017: fig. 5) carved in a crude flat style, which is completely different from the one of the other rock-reliefs of the Swāt region (Filigenzi 2015: 25, 218, fig. 108. See Figs 1.23, 1.26, 2.36, 2.37), while it recalls very closely the style of the 11th century rock-reliefs of Kardang in the Kulu-Lahul-Chamba region (Widorn 2015: fig. 7.10).

4 Again, since it was spring and there was still no road cutting the cliff along the river, the pilgrim, in order to reach Manglawar from Dhumat 'ala, had to follow the mountain route that bypassed that cliff from upstream.

1.2.2 Manglawar/Mingora

Tucci was convinced that the ancient city of Mengjeli (Mêng chie li), mentioned in the Chinese sources, had to be located in Mingora rather than at Manglawar as it was thought before. In fact, in the 1971 edition of Tucci's *Travels*, fn. 196 (see p. 110) mentions Mingora and not Manglawar: "Rahorbhyara and Mingora seem therefore to be identical or to be very near; in that case Rahorbhyara might be an ancient name for Saidu Sharif or any other village near Mingora". It is evident that Tucci must have changed his mind and moved the location of the ancient capital to Mingora. He was certainly right, since the existence of a major ancient urban centre in the Mingora area was later proved by archaeological research (see a reassessment of the problem in Olivieri 2022a, and in Iori 2023b). In order to support this view, he incidentally (and wrongly) diminuished the importance of Manglawar: "[my] doubt of the accuracy of the identification of Mêng chie li with Manglaor was only strenghtened by a careful examination of the ground around Mangalaor [*sic*], bare as it is of ruins and archaeologically very poor compared to the many places in Swāt" (Tucci 1958[2]: 76-77).[5]

In summary, if the heart of Uḍḍiyāna is certainly Butkara, and thus Mingora, Maṅgalaor must instead be identified with Manglawar (Olivieri 2017). Consequently, as shown elsewhere (Olivieri 2022a: 14) the nearby sanctuary of Rahorbhyara cannot be located at or near Saidu Sharif.

5 The statement is contradicted by Tucci's own narrative, where he largely describes the archaeology of the Manglawar area (Tucci 1958[2]: 87-88). However: not only Mingora was Menjeli, but certainly also Massaga, the capital of Swāt at the times of Alexander (see Iori 2023b).

1.3 Vajirasthāna, Bázira, Beira, Barikot, Bir-Kot

Note by Luca Maria Olivieri

The name of the ancient city of Barikot, Bázira/Beira, is mentioned as Vajirasthāna in a Brāhmī-Śāradā inscription (c. 10th century) found on the hill-top at Barikot now in the Lahore Museum (Hinüber 2020). The toponym can be interpreted as 'the sthāna ([fortified] place) of Vajra/Vajira' (see Figs 2.26, 2.40).

At a certain moment though, the aulic/local, Sanskrit/Prakrit diglossia Bázira/Beira, whose earliest attestation is respectively reported by Arrian and Curtius Rufus's sources,[1] is testified by the presence of the toponym Vajirasthāna in the late antique epigraphic record. Had it not been for Tucci (1958), people would still be following the interpretation of Vajirasthana as 'Waziristan' (*Epigraphia Indica,* XXI).

The prakrit form ('Beira') is undoubtedly preserved in the present toponym (Barikot, Berikoot, Baira-kot, Bir-kot)[2] Alongside this, however, the aulic form 'Vajirasthāna' must also have been preserved, perhaps also due to the ongoing process of Sanskritization in late antique Gandhara (Salomon2018a: 72).

It is possible thus that the aulic form Vajirasthāna passed from the Śahis to the Ghaznavids and remained in use in Ghaznavid and Ghurid times (Wajīrastana; Olivieri and Sesana 2023).

Having said that, it remains surprising that Tucci failed to reinforce his view with the reference of the same toponym in *The Blue Annals,* a text

1 Arr. *Anab.* IV 28, 4; Curt., VIII 10, 1.

2 See Godfrey 1912 (on the history of Barikot and the continuity of the toponym see Olivieri et al. 2022). The earliest mention of Barikot is found in C.-A.Court 1840, "Berikoot" (307), "Berikout" (map).

he had at hand in the translation of G. Roerich (1949), and of which (in the same years of his first surveys in Swāt, 1955, published in Tucci 1958) he had asked T. Wylie to draw up an index of names (Wylie 1957). Curiously enough, Wylie missed the term Vajirasthāna, and consequently also Tucci.[3]

In fact, in that celebrated 15th century Tibetan text (deb-ther sngon-po or *The Blue Annals*) Buddha himself gives a prophecy on king Indrabuthi, whose seat was located "In the northern quarter, in Śrī-Vajrasthāna, Oḍḍīyāna" (Roerich 1949, 361).

> De kho na nyid kyi sgron ma'i rgyud las | lha mos gsol ba | gsang ba chen po'i rgyud 'di ni | shes pa dang ni bshad pa su | bcom ldan 'das kyis bka' stsal pa | byang phyogs su dpal rdo rje'i gnas o ḍi ya ṇa ru rgyal po indrabhūti zhes bya bas shes pa dang bshad pa dang | sems can la gsal bar byed do ||

> And the Devī asked: 'Who will understand and explain this great hidden Tantra?' The Blessed One replied: In the northern quarter, in Śrī-Vajrasthāna Oḍḍīyāna, a king named Indrabhūti will understand it, will teach it and will expound it to living beings.' And again the Devī asked: 'O blessed One! What stage of the path has king Indrabhūti reached? Pray state it!' And the Blessed One said: 'The Vajirapāṇi king mentioned by me in the Śrī-Jñānatilakayogīnitantrarāja (dPal Ye-ses thig-le'I gryuid-kyi rgyal-po, Kg. rGyud-'bum, No. 422) is this Indrabhūti[4] *'

This text is important for several reasons. First, it shows the association of Vajirasthāna with Barikot and conversely with the Bázira/Beira of the Alexandrographers. Then, it tells us that - according to the Buddha's spiritual teaching - the city is the seat of King Indrabhuti, Padmasambhava's tutor and mentor. Finally, it conveys the reality or veracity of the geographical (and historical) information contained in the Tibetan text.

Vajirasthāna was thus identified as the seat of an important lineage of Tantric teaching, which was associated with King Indrabhūti, and with Padmasambhava. Despite its small size, the importance of Barikot for the history of Buddhism in these western regions must have been far greater

3 Tucci could have used this information to further support the identification of the placename Vajirasthāna of the Barikot inscription with Barikot itself and not with 'Waziristan' as previously proposed (cf. Tucci 1958: 296, fn. 28).

4 Translation from Tibetan by Saerji (University of Peking).

than we can imagine. The recent archaeological discoveries at the site (Olivieri et al. 2022) help us understand the paramount role of this ancient city (see Coloru 2021, Iori 2023).

Part 2

2.1 The Way of Swāt

Preface

In this new edition of my volume on the archeological missions in Swāt, published for the first time in 1963, I would like to point out first of all that I find no reason to change the facts and the assessments made at that time. Yet, I could make some substantial additions, since the excavation of the sacred area of Butkara is now completed, and Dr. Domenico Faccenna is bringing to conclusion the fine and learned description of it in five volumes which will soon be published [Faccenna 1980-1981]. The discovered tombs of the necropolis from a few dozen have now become hundreds: as we skillfully question the deceased, they will answer us with soft whispers about their culture and religion. They were Dards, speaking an ancient Indo-Aryan dialect, who belonged to large and consecutive migrating waves coming down mostly from Turkestan, or penetrating the area from Iran; they spread from Pamir to the edge of Tibet, from Gilgit to the borders of Kashmir.

Those who wish to go into greater depth must make a choice: in the Journal *East and West* published by IsMEO they will find the almost yearly reports of the excavation of Professor Giorgio Stacul [Stacul 1987]; they can consult the volume *The Proto-Historic Graveyard of Swāt* (Pakistan) by Silvi Antonini-Stacul and read the description of a few hundred tombs and their contents [Silvi Antonini and Stacul 1972]. Dr. Faccenna's volumes, step by step, shed light on the events that took place in the sacred area of Butkara with its thousand statues and its mighty architectures; these are described and studied in their varied styles, in the language of plastic scenes as well as in statuary.

I wrote and will shortly publish in the Journal *East and West* a synthesis of the cultural, historical, and religious adventures of those people who

settled in Pamir and Hindukush, though they kept on the outskirts of the arduous caravan trails stretching from Central Asia to Iran and the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent; for some time China exerted its power on them [Tucci 1977]. This is already a lot, a great deal, but since in science a discovery elicits a new one, I would say that we have just begun.

Giuseppe Tucci – Rome, November 1977

Introduction

This book gives an account of the reasons which moved me to hold excavation campaigns in Swāt that are still under way and will continue for more many years. In this volume, again, I will speak of the discovery of ancient civilizations, but with this distinctive feature: the findings described in the book on Nepal[1] took place during an expedition in the heart of Sub-Himalaya; these instead are the result of well-organized archeological research. In both cases, I started from references found in literary works coming from different sources, which then proved to be true in the discoveries that took place.

Swāt is no closer to us than Nepal; it only takes less time to arrive at its center than to reach Jumla where I discovered the documents of the Mallas. One can fly Rome to Karachi in a few hours; leaving Karachi in the morning, one arrives at Peshawar at one in the afternoon; then, it is only three or four hour drive from Peshawar to Swāt. This is now a comfortable and short trip, but it was not so at the times of Alexander who had arrived there after crossing the whole of Iran and Afghanistan. The journey of the Macedonian must have been adventurous. Still, if we retrace the way he followed to look for or discover traces he might have left, it won't be a less fascinating experience; if we use new documents to emphasize the meeting of West and East which took place even after him – actually, it took place especially after him – in those sites where the art of Gandhara prospered, the art where Buddhist mythography used a narrative style typical of the western classic world, we will find the process quite exciting though not as adventurous. Now that Italy has started these excavation campaigns and has come to dialogue with other nations that take a scientific presence in Asia as a prestigious and unselfish goal, enlightened and learned people should know, at least a little, the results our research has achieved to this day. We should pay particular attention to these results because, in places which are geographically distant but surprisingly culturally close, we find the last irradiation of an art we are familiar with.

1 G. Tucci, *Nepal: Alla scoperta del regno dei Malla*, Newton Compton, Roma 1977.

If the already existing fruitful cooperation can grow on the foundation of this ancient solidarity, we will have advanced science as well as contributed to strengthen ties with Asia we Italians feel sincere and deep.

I want to add that there is no incompatibility between the different topics that attract our interest and we focus on time after time. I have always thought that busying ourselves on just one idea or one specific area of research prevents us from perceiving the whole spectrum of human events present everywhere which appear diverse but are essentially similar. In this case, then, there is a subtle but necessary relationship between the archeological investigations in Swāt and my previous ones. Studies are an adventure which lasts a whole lifetime, an uninterrupted and attentive journey carried out by an ever curious and never satisfied mind.[2]

2 This expedition in Swāt was carried out under the sponsorship of IsMEO and through the contribution of this Institute as well as by my own means.

2.1.1 How the Excavation Campaigns in Swāt Began

Many are of the opinion that I have become an archeologist because I have fostered and coordinated the excavation campaigns in Asia; still, those who've followed my work do not ignore the fact that my interests point to the history of thought and religions. Let me state right away that I have great respect for archeologists, not only because they have to study hard, but also because their occupation is based on a profound harmony between theoretical research and an active life: philological investigations and outdoor excavation campaigns far from inhabited places and city centers. I have such a high esteem of all these things that it saddens me to realize how the State, in its usual awkward and uneducated way, takes little notice of archeology; things have reached such a state that if we continue this way its track will be lost, because thousands of other more lucrative ways are now open to willing and intelligent young people. It is a fact though that I am not an archeologist even if my first studies were on Latin epigraphy; by chance, soon after I turned twelve years old, I fell in love with Sanskrit and Hebrew, then later on I tackled the Iranian language. So, little by little I walked further into the labyrinth of oriental studies, which is for me both fascinating and enlightening; in fact, the more I became familiar with Asian books and visions, the more I began to perceive new solutions to my questioning doubts. Then, the Indian and Chinese philosophical nuances, the logical structures of some systems of thought, mythologies as products of visions and nightmares that were both transcendental and physical, attracted me: they were like apparitions of a world which at first seemed very distant from our own, but then, by reading carefully the symbols found in them, they revealed themselves extremely close, spiritually and humanly near. I would also find more life than when I was a university student, in that dry and rigid historical linguistic studies where archeology seemed to be stuck, lost in details that sounded like nonsense; I thought archeology should provide the means to arise through glimpses of light, the life of things and people of times gone by. Thus, I left behind archeology and moved to the Orient filled with hopes which later on I found were not unfounded. Nonetheless, in the past few years, at the end of the Tibetan and Nepalese explorations, out of need for my research, I am now back to archeology. This is not because I intend to

work as an archeologist, but because the highly expert scholars working with me might properly highlight the monuments, the documents, or the voices that can fill the tremendous historical voids existing in many parts of Asia. Actually, to tell the truth, it was Tibet that pointed me the way to Swāt. Tibet has been for many years the greatest love of my life; and it still is, because the more difficult it is to satisfy it with a new challenge, the warmer I feel toward it. In the eight trips I have travelled far and wide, I have lived in villages and monasteries, I have knelt in front of masters and sacred images, I have joined caravans to cross mountains and deserts vast as the sea, I have discussed religion and philosophy with wise monks, and along slow and stony trails I have always found traces of Guru Rinpoche, the sharp master Padmasambhava. He arrived in Tibet in the 8th century and performed the ceremonies of consecration of the great monastery of Samye, on the South of Lhasa; the building shines with its golden pagodas in the midst of gently sloping mountains and a pale range of sand reaching down to sweep against the Tsangpo River. Popular religiosity sees traces of his passing through that area: marks on a rock are his footprints, caves are where he rested, huge piles of stones are mountains he crushed.

There was the need of an exorcist like him to subdue the presence of evil and bring about conversion. His uncommon personality, his magic virtues, the simple faith of the people, and the increasing number of legends, have made him a second Buddha in Tibet. Yet, he had come from Swāt where he was born, probably the son of a king; other stories say that he appeared miraculously on a lotus flower blossomed in the midst of a lake.

I was and I am still very much interested in Padmasambhava [see Fig. 2.39], but I am even more attracted to his hometown where everything seems to indicate that at that time there was a great love for religious and literary life and where Buddhism, for reasons still unknown to us, took up gnostic and magic forms; I have always been attracted by these expressions, not only because they nourish those feelings of anguish and hope that are not unknown to the West, but especially because in that late Buddhism reappear ancient myths and liturgies presented in new forms and interpreted in a different manner from the original simplicity. What is left of all this in Swāt? Considering this question, I recalled the historiographers of Alexander the Great who were the first to speak about it.

I still remember the impression I had when as a senior high school student I read the account of Alexander the Great's exploits, the adventurous and almost reckless events of a few men who, in the attempt to take hold of the defeated Achaemenid empire, first reached central Asia through a continuous warfare, then they proceeded farther across up to the banks of

the Indo. I saw in Alexander the first Westerner in whom the determination to conquer was stirred by the same fascination for the East I also felt burning within me. Those stories spoke of how Alexander, coming down from Afghanistan, turned against the Assakenoi and seized one by one their citadels; since the survivors had found refuge on top of a mountain, he pursued them, laid siege on them and then exterminated them. Then, he continued his march toward the Indo confident on all sides. I followed those events on the map and managed to vaguely pinpoint the places Arrian spoke of, a region edged between Kashmir and Afghanistan, South of Turkestan; the map was unfortunately inaccurate, and everything left me doubtful. My search for names similar to Bazira or Ora, the two castles that collapsed under the force of the Macedonians, was useless. Then, I moved to other studies, I no longer thought about Swāt until, as I already said, the Tibetan surveys renewed my old interests. Thus, Greece had come to help Tibet, but there was more. Swāt has also been described by Chinese pilgrims who from the end of the 4th to the 8th century had travelled there, out of devotion as well as out of love for wisdom, going through long and adventurous journeys. They crossed on foot Central Asia and the deadly deserts, they rested in monasteries or in important Indian universities, and then returned home the same way they had come from, or through the dangerous paths of Hindukush, or by sea. Their travel logs, short and to the point that they can be taken as scientific documentation, anticipate the accuracy of Marco Polo, Pietro Della Valle and Matteo Ricci. The Chinese speak of sacred things and listen to stories of miracles, but pay close attention to facts and places; if we compare these writings to the Indian high sounding and verbose fairy tales, the objectivity of their information immediately stands out next to the hazy Indian descriptions. They are two diverse ways of looking at and describing things. The Chinese observe and carefully take notes by writing the distance from one place to another, describing the monuments they visit and briefly mentioning historic events, speaking of kings and famous people, and recounting legends that bestowed dignity on certain shrines. They understand things from a practical point of view; they are like pioneers pointing the way to others.

The Indians also used to spend their life journeying from one to the other of the countless shrines that piety or fear have marked the country, a kind of divine landscape overlapping a human one. Yet, instead of writing guides, they have composed eulogies, long, wordy praises describing the tremendous majesty of the gods and the struggle they had with their enemies at the beginning of times. The main actors of these terrific struggles were beings beyond any human understanding for their rage; they caused awe with their power and magic; they were beings not only unreal but

unimaginable as well; they were enormous beings who had just come out of chaos, but barely anxious for an order, and still lacking harmony. Later on, the Tibetans will also arrive; since the healer I have spoken of above was born in Swāt, they were particularly attracted by the places which had been sanctified by the miraculous birth of Padmasambhava. They arrived in the 13th century when Buddhism had almost entirely disappeared, and they found many ruins, yet few surviving communities. In their eyes, though, solely focused on the miracles, a mysterious world was opening up. Swāt had been the country of flying witches in the air and teachers of exorcisms and spells; they saw in those women, experts in potions and incantations the incarnation of supernatural powers that not even Islam had been able to erase in some regions next to Swāt; thus, almost under a spell, they turned from wonder to wonder. In their writings the historical and geographical reality of the country are replaced by a style so focused on praising the extraordinary, that things lose their identity. Three different peoples with three diverse ways of looking at the world and speaking about it. The Indians bring us back to the primal awe of the fearful soul; the Tibetans show the anxiety of grasping a magic and ever-changing world; the Chinese take note of everything with scientific objectivity. It is then only natural that the Chinese are my favorite guides among these ruin-filled places, which would otherwise remain silent leftovers of a lost past unless they had named them and recounted their events, conveying historical insight on a pile of stones. The Chinese, though, as we have seen, were not the first ones to go there; writers from the classic world had preceded them on the same spots where Asia and Europe almost merge. The writers who followed Alexander the Great kept a diary of their adventure; later, novelists of the Hellenistic period would weave those accounts with incredible fantasies, yet Arrian does not add much or very little; he speaks of the different stops and reconstructs the direction of the long journey; he describes places where memorable battles were fought in such an accurate way that it is not difficult to identify the sequence of the journey. If, among the many choices at my disposal, I have chosen the village of Ude[gram] in Swāt as the first place to excavate, it is exactly because even today it keeps the name known to the Greek writer [see Tribulato and Olivieri 2017].

The accuracy of the Greeks who were inclined to concreteness, appears also even sharper for different reasons, on the opposite side of the continent, in the intense brevity of the Chinese. One and the other are separated by the imaginary exuberance of India; with no success they reach for each other over the centuries along the endless silk road that Marco Polo opened again to the flow of ideas after many wars and invasions. Greece and China are ideally close for a similar inner balance that the Greeks defined ‘measure’

while the Chinese described it with Confucius' 'the doctrine of the mean'. This, after all, is the search for a limit.

This is then how the Italian Archaeological Mission, organized by the Centro scavi e ricerche archeologiche in Asia of IsMEO, the Italian Institute for the Middle and Far East, now at its eight-excavation campaign, places Italy (though late) on the same level of England, America, France, Germany and other nations, which for over half a century financed active archaeological missions in different parts of Asia.

2.1.2 First Findings and Contacts

It was only in 1955, after the last expedition into Nepal, when I had discovered the monuments of the Malla, that I could spend a few days visiting Swāt and form an opinion about the significance of its monuments and set the foundations for future research which would eventually start in 1956. We reached it from Peshawar, three and a half hours by car, through an excellent road that crosses the pass of Malakand and then falls into a wide valley.

The short descriptions by the reporters of Alexander the Great and the Chinese pilgrims were not enough to set us on the right path. The land is filled with ruins: one place would would have been just like another if I had not already decided to set foot on the city conquered by the Macedonian and the principal monastery in Swāt which, according to the Chinese, had to be close to the capital. First of all, we had to make an inventory of the ruins to complete the one made by Stein. This archeological work lasted almost two months; three of us did it: Dr. F. A. Khan, director of the Archeological Service of Pakistan, Ms. Bonardi, now my wife, who had followed me to Nepal and had to take photographic evidence of the monuments discovered during our journeys, and I. Even in Swāt we had to walk and climb. We walked for about 700 km during the least appropriate season, from the beginning of August to almost the end of September, when the land is overcome by a sticky slumber: the sun strikes mercilessly on those lands and the humidity is so high that you can almost see it in the air: it rises up from the waters soaking the ground like sweat or dew. Fortunately, logistic problems do not exist in Swāt; it is not like in Tibet or Nepal where one has to find caravan workers, because there are no roads there. Actually, paved roads comfortable enough for transit cross every part of Swāt and there is no village, even the most remote one, that cannot be reached by road; however, to reach the ruins clinging on the mountains or buried in the

narrow valleys there is no other way than on foot. Meanwhile the days pass in other similarly important tasks before starting the exploration.

When one goes to a new place, the first thing one has to do is settle down, and not in a practical sense, but psychologically. One has to contact the local authorities, learn how people deal with each other, try to understand their personalities, how they interact with foreigners, and try to grasp their thoughts or the images that guide or shape their life. In Swāt there is no need for tents because besides the most modern hotel of Saidu Sharif, built by the [Yusufzai] state, and many privately owned others, in the most suggestive and open spaces, there is no lack of rest houses that the Wali generously provides for the use of those who ask for them.

The capital is Saidu Sharif; it is the capital because the Wali, the Walihadt, and government offices are there. Yet, the most important city is Mingora because it is the business center and the meeting point of all roads.

The closeness of Peshawar and especially Batkhela, in Malakand, where the roads of Dir and Chitral Districts lead, limits the resources of this bazar only to the needs of Swāt and the mountainous region on the North. Place of sale or exchange of consumer goods, it is a quiet bazar compared to the sounds or excesses of those in other places; it displays the short liveliness of domestic life which is run by the rhythm of times for prayer and meals. It starts stirring when the sun is already high and gradually quiets down at sunset.

During the night electric lights shine on the quiet and empty roads and slide undisturbed on closed doors; any striking or loud sign is missing. The bazaar looks like a wide warehouse for small stores scattered in the nearby villages; it feeds the small trade split along the roads and, at the same time though in a more modest way, it is a collection of household items: the colorful cotton curtains, the wide woolen shawls which can be used also as a coat or as a blanket, the embroidery which damp women's boredom closed in their homes. The salesman has his own fixed clients and waits peacefully for the passing of time. There is no extravagant and loud display of the goods that in every other place wants to seize the attention of villagers or tourists. Therefore, advertising has not advanced much here: it is just beginning to take some tentative steps with a few neon lights in hotels and *chaikhana* that correspond to our bars, with the difference that instead of coffee or liquor, they sell tea and barbequed lamb.

For tourists, the shrewdest vendors lay on the sides of the door curtains or colored drapes which are among the most sought out items of craftsmen;

there are also piles of white caps embroidered with drawings and golden arabesques, which foreigners always buy as a souvenir of the place. Some years ago, a dentist had displayed a huge set of false teeth which greatly impressed Gujiar children. It is now gone; maybe the Wali had it removed though it didn't look bad: it was a colorful item in a bazar where everything has a subdued tone, with no screams and no chants. Saidu Sharif and Mingora are still separated one from the other by a 2 km long road but connected by new buildings: the hotel, the colleges, the civil employees' district, or the new industries will soon end up absorbing the two cities in a single tangle. Naturally, just like in the greater part of Asia, no architecture with typically local characteristics has appeared; the mosques kept a traditional style and the most prominent buildings have the colonial English architectural design. New homes keep the ingenious functionality of the old ones. There seems to be no care or imagination in their style. There are two or three models which only vary in size: the forts, residences of the Khan or leaders in the countryside, show concern for self-defense rather than signs of power; common people's homes respect the compulsory separation between the rooms reserved to women and those where men live. Lastly come the houses of poor people. There isn't yet any cluster which cuts man out of nature: every house is just a stone's throw from the countryside. So, the city as we define it has not appeared yet; these are villages reaching out one to another, but they haven't merged yet. In the evening, a lazy smoke, like the one rising on an altar, climbs up from the homes without getting too high; it drifts a little and then lays down in midair as if it wishes to rest among people. Soon after sunset nothing moves around and everything sinks into a troubling silence: it is the ancient belief embedded in the soul that with the coming of night danger lurks around the corner.

Economic development is making giant strides. Since the first time I set foot in it, Swāt has changed tremendously; the number of new factories is increasing, trade is flourishing, but everything is done with calm, with that balance that the West has lost even the memory of. We are running so much that we are breathless; instead, they still have the time to forget the passing of time: this is the secret to live within oneself, the marvelous faculty which allows us to keep balanced between the relationship with ourselves and others, the practical and the abstract. I envy the long rest of merchants who smoke the pipe crouching on the edge of their stores, careless and impervious spectators of life flowing in front of them, showing an impassive look which is not clear if it is thoughtfulness or emptiness, though it is certainly an escape.

The first thing we had to do was to visit the Wali, Major General Jahanzeb, the ruler or lord of the country. Naturally, even in cases such as this there is an etiquette to be followed. As soon as you arrive in Swāt and take a room in a hotel, there is the inevitable visit of the First Secretary, Mr. Ataullah Khan. He is tall, well built, an excellent climber, elegantly dressed, speaking a perfect English, and with pleasant manners. I immediately asked to be received by the Wali and the meeting was set at ten o'clock the following morning in the government office built on a vast square with plane trees below the Palace. Every day, the Wali conducts state affairs with his collaborators. There's always a large crowd waiting: the guards, formed by hardy youth with spotless uniforms, rifles, guns, bandoliers, and people with grievances, seeking justice, and offenses to expiate.

Introduced by the First Secretary, we enter in the wide study of His Highness: modern and welcoming, well kept, with furniture which looked sober and in good taste. The Wali comes toward us smiling and warmly shakes our hands; he's in his forties with marked features, deep eyes and sudden movements typical of army people and the good nature of educated people. He has done a lot of travelling and knows Italy well, and speaking with him is both easy and pleasant. We do not have the impression of being with one of those curious people so easy to meet in Asia who, out of romantic habits slow to die, or because of the novelty of habits and practices, might surprise or confuse the visitor.

The lively chat lasts about half an hour and all is settled: the places where to do the excavation, the wages for the workers, and the rent of the fields. This meeting started a mutual friendship which has grown over the years and a generous spirit of collaboration among us has never lacked since then. When we left, we paid a visit to his son, Walihadt Aurangzeb, who assists his father in the government: he is a strong, humorous, athletic man. He acted as assistant of the head of the army who is now the President of the Republic of Pakistan, General Ayub Khan, and he then married his daughter. He seems to know half the world and has such an affable disposition that everyone likes him.

In these times when institutions and governments are a main concern, the reader might want to know something about the administration of Swāt. I'll be very brief on this topic because if there's one thing in the world that I do not care about is politics, laws or what we call government. I only care about the past because I consider it as I wish, good or bad as it might be: if you take this daydreaming away from me, I will die. I am interested in those other fantasies called religion or philosophy because they're the dramatic representation of human hopes and agonies. I am most interested

in this splendid sky and its sun as long as mad science or perverse vanity of power will not take these pleasures away from us.

Since not everyone thinks as I do, I will say a thing or two on the rather simple administration of Swāt. The leader is, as I have said, the Wali, Major General Jahanzeb. Everything is under his direct control; he personally makes sure that his orders are followed. Every afternoon he walks at random one or another street and stops in villages to ensure that all is going as planned. In the running of public affairs, he is assisted by the crown prince, Walihadt Aurangzeb, and by the Advisory Council made up of twenty-five people, fifteen elected by the people and ten named by the Wali himself: they submit to the Wali plans of reforms or opinions on the most urgent issues. The country is divided in 33 districts (tashils) that are under a Tashildar who has civil and penal power. Overseeing the Teshildar there are the Hakim or judges who deal with the most important decisions. Then, over everyone else, there are the ministers. The army has about twelve thousand soldiers: the leader of the army is the Wali who is assisted by a commanding general. The Police Corps has about two thousand officers. The law, just like in most Islamic states, is based on common practice and the Sharia which can be ignored or modified on a case by case basis by the unanimous decision of the whole people called to express its opinion in a public assembly. So, in a simple way, all goes smoothly without anything too complex.

The following day, we visited the Wali's father, Badshah Wali Myangul Shahzada, recognized as the father of the State of Swāt. During the summer he resides in his villa of Marghuzar immersed in a silence reminding of the past, cradled by the glitter of marbles and sizzling flowers, in the midst of a meandering creek and rocks extending beyond the empty space; in the woods up the mountains, live unconsciously antelopes, bears and leopards. The Badshah [Abdul Wadud Shahzada], as people call him, is a short slim man who seems voluble, noble and dignified, wearing old style clothes and having a penetrating gaze. You'd take him for a hermit: in fact, that is what he has become after he handed over the burden of government to his son and consecrated himself to the study of the Holy Koran and meditation; despite his honorable age, the warrior in him has not died away; he cannot give up mountain-climbing; people say that when hunting, his hand and eyesight are just perfect. His spirit, though, is now calm; the fearless leader, and the sharp and uncompromising politician, at the end of his days, has wisely decided to prepare himself to the inevitable encounter of life and death, which opens up to eternity or nothingness. People who, at the right time, find the courage to look right into the emptiness of affections or

passions inspire in me a boundless admiration. We have to get used to live outside of life when we are alive.

The conversation is held through an interpreter since the Badshah only speaks Pastho. His words seem to vibrate a wondering sadness; they sound like sparks of a distant fire and make you feel bathed by shining morning dew drops.

Our duties are not over yet. The last visit is to the great *ziyarat* where the Badshah's grandfather is buried, a holy man gifted by prophetic and human virtues while politically keen. The marble building is shiny; the sun bathes it with a splendid shower; within it, the ark enclosing the tomb looks similar to some of our ancient western sarcophagus. Pilgrims walk around it holding their hands close to each other, palms turned up. We line up after them and scatter flowers on the ark.

We are then ready to begin our work. People speak Pastho here and none of us can speak it yet. Just a few know how to speak Urdu: it is spoken by business people and especially school children who learn the national language of Pakistan. The First Secretary finds us an interpreter whose name is Zairin who is a tall, intelligent soldier carrying rifle and gun. He speaks Urdu very well and uses an abundance of Persian words; he is able-bodied like a cat and climbs rocks like a squirrel. He slowly becomes so interested in our research that he is the first one to discover in the fields the broken pottery we had been looking for.

2.1.3 The Survey

Here begins the pilgrimage. It is not an inaccurate word because our journey follows the ancient tracks Buddhist pilgrims walked on, far from the roads people use today. Swāt, in those days, was filled with monuments, monasteries and stupas often rising on the same spot where today villages lay; trails and alleys unwound daringly straight up slopes, crossed mountain passes, and descended on nearby valleys by the shortest route. In order to point the way, images of the Buddha and merciful deities whose cult had gradually spread to seek protection from natural calamities and increasing invasions, had been carved in the rocks or on steles erected on the side of a path. They functioned like road signs leading to the sacred sites; in exchange for a flower or a prayer, these signs would assure the traveler spiritual merits and protection from danger. We too follow them and when the way ends in the midst of fields that have just been sowed or on inclines which have somewhat slid down, to find again the link to the sacred journey,

we ask the farmers where other *but*, as they call Buddhist images, might be hidden. Almost always, though not knowing why we were looking for idols, for the locals would consider sacrilegious the searching of statues, they would offer precious directions. High on perpendicular rocks, almost setting watch on the plain, they would point to gigantic sculptures or would guide us along the low walls delimiting the fields, where they would dig up huge stones and there, we would find carved images of Lokesvara [Avalokitesvara] or Padmapani [Padmapani-Avalokitesvara].

In a short time we became so used to this kind of search that as we detected a boulder less irregular than others, we would stop to turn it upside down aided by our guardians: almost always we would see a sitting or standing figure in a blessing posture or with a lotus flower in the hand. So, statue after statue, carving after carving, stupa after stupa, pottery fragments after pottery fragments, through a meticulous investigation and questioning every farmer in every village, and checking every earthen mound, we were able to come up with an archeological map better than the one of Stein, and ascertain the state of monuments and ruins of its Buddhist age.

Swāt has a homey look and it is not like the vast and intimidating magnificence of the Himalayan areas. The richness of colors and contrasts of Central Asia is not as loud. There is more light than color; it is a diffused light which creates shadows and draws lines, resting on the mountainsides toward the Hindukush and then propping up on the massive Mankyal.

The name corresponds very conveniently to the place, because Swāt is the name of the river flowing through the region from North to South; close to the river head it flows swiftly among narrow cliffs, then spreads its vast flow silently and calmly in a welcoming valley; finally, it turns into many creeks with long shivers of green on the stony ground at the bottom.

The whole country merges toward the river and its fertile expanse; it gets there with its mountains that are barren in the west and forest-filled in the East, all intersecting each other so closely that the streams struggle to dig their way between the sheer cliffs and walls. Narrow valleys are streaked with the smoke rising from villages and the fields almost evergreen with crops; there are two wheat harvests, then one of rice and one of corn before the cold weather brings in a change for the worse all around.

People are mostly Pathans (Pashtuns) though the Gujiars, the settled and nomad groups, are quite numerous too. The first ones clear their fields in the dense woods and on the mountain slopes; they raise cattle, cultivate wheat and corn. The second group has not abandoned the custom

of seasonal migrations. There is, though, a difference among them: while the settled have forgotten their language and speak Pashto, the nomads are at least bilingual because they've not forgotten the ancient language.

As the first rains start, the second group rushes toward the warmer plain of Pakistan where they work as seasonal laborers or lead to pasture herds and flocks of sheep, then go back to the mountains in the spring. They move in groups: animals scattered along the streets and in the fields go ahead of people who follow with children on their shoulders.

Behind everyone come the women, as beautiful as long as youth lasts, wearing long black pants and tops decorated with twinkling and ringing silver patterns; they carry pots and pans wrapped in a net of ropes balanced on their heads.

During the night the migrants stop at cemeteries next to shadowy wild olive trees which are as welcoming as gardens: there sheep can graze and children play (Fig. 2-5). Gujiars' nomadic life is a special one: raising cows and forced to move according to seasons, they live close to agricultural environments. In their stops, they help out in the harvesting of wheat and sugar cane. Women usually do the work, since men take care of the pasture.

Their gathering points are where valleys meet, beginning with Kalam near the springs of Swāt, where mountains are all around, forming a circle which seems to have no way out if one does not find small dangerous and uneven paths running along the streams or falling steeply from on high. All around there is a lush green with lively woods and forests. When villages become sparse because of the increasingly un-even and uncomfortable terrain for people to walk on, wild life and beasts become masters: bucks, bears, and leopards.

As you follow the ruins, you suddenly hear the loud flapping of a flock of partridges. They let you come to a few feet and you do not even see them since they are disguised among the grey rocks; then their sound breaks the wall of silence which seems to be wrapping the fallen monuments like a blanket. For this reason, Swāt is known all over Pakistan as the promised land of hunters and it would actually be if the Wali had not wisely lowered the number of hunting licenses. Yet, when a distinguished guest arrives, big hunting parties take place. I am quite indifferent to all this. I never liked hunting: it is a natural dislike since my childhood when I would accompany my father in his unlucky hunting trips: as soon as he started aiming, he felt really bothered by my jumping, screaming, and waving one of those big scarves popular among farmers at that time. Then, this dislike of mine was justified by Buddhism which encompasses in one same love human beings

and animals. There is something unique, though: man has to be considered separately since he has consciously detached himself from nature and from that intense vibration of life generated by the necessary alternation between births and deaths. I do not mean to say that humans have become so little sensitive to have lost any appreciation of nature; poets prove the opposite. What I mean is that in this case man only looks at nature through himself, in an immediate and unexplainable way; each one looks at it in his own way, with unique ties, memories, and rare associations that he would like to share with others through art. This though, is still something different. I have often found myself in some deserted places where I could only see the sky and plants, and I woud hear in the air a music composed of mumblings and mysterious melodies. Nonetheless, I would not see myself clearly outside of that melody, but united with it, a necessary part of it: I thought I was a tree or an insect. This would also probably happen to Chinese artists who never depicted plants or flowers without first becoming one with them. In these cases, however, when people suddenly hear the sound of voices coming from far away, that enchantment breaks because man has come out from that original unity and wonder. Prodigal son or creator? I do not know. No matter what, this feeling I had when I was a child has kept me away from hunting as a source of useless pain. There's too much suffering in the world: our days are woven in it from cradle to grave; there are great sufferings and small pains; there are physical and spiritual ones; some are chosen blindly and others just fall on us by chance. Yet, the suffering of animals looks to me as belonging to a different dimension: it is just suffering, a metaphysical longing, the desperate solitude of suffering. Human beings have many ways of lessening suffering: I am not referring to those means provided by science, but I am speaking of the tools such as reason or faith, and the endurance to suffering that education or personal convictions train us for or help us get used to. Humans do not lack the comfort of the compassion of others or the tears of those next to them. In the animal world there is absolute suffering, the suffering experienced in its boundless way and in solitude. The fascination of Swāt is all in its discreet and well-matched scenery: bright and clean fall mornings, nights with the moon's light penetrating from far away tapping the tops of Mankyal, miraculous glass staircases resting on the sky in still air.

In the cemeteries which are always close to villages, death piles up tombs with stone slabs standing perpendicularly at the two ends; these are sometimes decorated with carvings of flowers. As one walks toward North, the tomb's front displays a roughly carved stone or a wooden horse's head on a long neck; the artist that carves them is not aware that he continues extremely old decorative patterns, tired survivors of funeral

images of horses and riders common until recently in Chitral and Nuristan. Cemeteries are the peaceful extensions of villages and things: it looks as if the dead do not intend to deprive the living of their presence. The two worlds of life and death are not separated but walk hand in hand. Tombs mushroom and invade fields and form magical funeral clusters around inhabited areas: having started the journey to the other side, the departed have not gone that far. This poverty is the sign of that equality Islam offers among people: rich people remain close to the poor. Just the size differs between the houses of the owner, the Khan, and the one of the farmers. No disturbing and useless differences between classes exist even after death, distinctions based solely on what is extra and un-necessary. Everyone is the same, especially after death which is the end of diversities and the door to eternal brotherhood. You hardly ever find those huge mausoleums which stubbornly strive to maintain pride and vanity even after death. Only the saint whose tomb changes into a place of prayer, can see a solemn tomb rise on his mortal remains.

2.1.4 The City Conquered by Alexander

Our investigation started at the southern border of Swāt and more specifically where the road stops in front of a massive rock, solid limestone, stuck into the river and forcing it to change its course. This knoll, awkwardly sitting on the bank like a crouching elephant, and the village next to it are now called Barikot. The name corresponds to the ancient one of Vajira that Alexander's writers rendered Bazira. The city, despite its appropriate defenses, could not resist the war machines and skill of the Macedonian. The inhabitants, fearing the worst, escaped during the night and found refuge and built their defenses on top of the sacred mountain hoping to avoid extermination. It is still not clear which mountain it was. Stein thought of Una-sar because he saw in Une the transliterated word of '*avarana*', which in Sanskrit means "fortified place", transcribed Aornos by the Greeks. I am not that convinced of this identification. I still hold the opinion that the mountain is Mt Ilam [Fig. 2.33 bottom] which can be reached in a day's march from Barikot. It is a natural huge fortress with stiff tops; it offers a clear view of the plain and, if used as a defensive position, it can be a threat for those who cross Buner. After all, Alexander had a modest number of troops in Swāt and these had not ventured much beyond the nearby Udegram; way beyond this point started an uneven, mountainous, wooded area inhabited by people who were still at the very beginning of civilization. Then, from the top of Ilam the view reaches quite

far and wide; paths descend from all sides of the mountain that stands like a sentinel stationed there at the beginning of the world. I have also climbed the top of Ilam; compared to the Asian mountains it is not that high, almost a hill because it doesn't reach 3500 meters. I climbed it on a November morning, during one of those Asian falls shiny like crystal, transparent without shades, still as if waiting for something to happen, everything on earth bathed in a soft light and with things far away that seem breathlessly similar. It can be reached overcoming increasingly arduous turns: the first turn is reached by a shadowy path stretching along the river, also called Ilam. Then, the terrain suddenly rises and climbs on smooth cliffs; the path jumps up, runs along the side of the incline, peers out of cliffs hanging in the void, slides among narrow corridors, rests on a green flat area and finally comes out to reach the top. On a wide slab of stone one can read an invocation to Rama written in Nagara characters: *Sri-ram*. It is probably the same stone that according to Chinese pilgrims served as a bed to the Buddha when, according to legend, he was carried to these parts.

We know that when different religions take each other's place in a specific area, they occupy the same sites; as soon as man imagines a divine presence in a forest or on a high mountain, both become permanently sacred. The gods become their tenants.

Even Swāt's Badshah often climbs on the Ilam to pray on a solitary rock facing west. Ilam's sacredness, as it always is the case to mountains, comes from the mesmerizing beauty one can see from there and only people living in darkness can remain indifferent to it. When I climbed it, as I said, it was November; despite the late season, the heat made the climbing hard. There was no dark cloud on the horizon, and the blue in the sky was so bright that it rested on the peaks of the Hindukush and the Pamir in the west, and in the North and the East it was as shining and pure as a gem. All the beauty of creation seemed to be in the air. A heaven-sent day such as that is enough to compensate for the emptiness you might feel approaching your life. According to me, it is here, and not in Una-sar, that those who had been defeated found refuge close to their god. The Greeks called this god Dionysos but it had to be one of the many epiphanies of the god of the mountain coming into Hinduism as Shiva who had a different, multiform appearance and thousands of names, all merging in a diversified unity.

Close to the invisible but unquestionable presence of the god, they felt protected from human threats; the refuge was close by, just a few hours march from Bazira and Ora, invincible guard of the valley below. Later on, Shiva had to live next to Buddhism until Hinduism overcame it again. Stein's Una-sar was an effective watchtower at the time of cannons but far

inland for the means and goals of Alexander. It is possible but not certain that Une corresponds to '*avarana*' and Aornos; after all, '*avarana*' is the common name given to fortresses on mountain tops.

No matter what, we were getting close to the city focus of my research, Ora, which I had read about as a child and had made me dream to walk in the footsteps of the Macedonian one day. Before beginning the study of the territory it is always advisable to make friends with local leaders: we are after all in their home. The Subedar, head of the village, his brother, the principal of the local school and other local leaders happily welcomed us. Here it is not like in other parts of Asia where suspicions are strong and hospitality rare unless one is their old friend. The men's quarter is comfortable. Guests are merrily and warmly welcomed, offering them a tea which is richer and tastier than a meal; they easily feel offended if one does not accept it willingly. Of course, women are invisible; they stay in the area of the house reserved to them, and they hardly ever appear in public. Even on the street you cannot see one who has not her face covered; religion, or better the customs, forces them to cover themselves under huge white capes which cover the head with a kind of hood; it is only through a small net falling in front of their eyes that one can see their sparkling eyes. To see so many men and only men it is a little boring; a city without women looks to me like a garden without flowers. The more someone rejoices in looking at them without any impure thought, the more they look beautiful, just like one might appreciate a garden blooming with colors and perfumes in the spring. The time for women is at sunset when, lining up one after another like migrating ants, in the conniving shade of the dying day, they walk to get water at the spring. Balancing the jar on their head in measured and silent steps, they walk the street sides resembling a sacred procession because of its dignified and light proceeding; then, at their return they disappear in the silence of dark alleys.

It would be logical to suppose that in peace time Ora would rise near the banks of the river in the valley along the trail that connected it with the prosperous whole sale storages in the plain, but the ruins crawling a long way up on the mountains remind us that the city had many lives. Did it start solidly nestled on those rocks, or did it climb up at later times? We had to start working in the valley, though we couldn't see any trace of walls in the ground, as well as on the mountains nearby hoping to find more definite elements during the digging. Still, that was not enough; on the southern edge of the valley, on a grey rock sticking out of the flat and smoothed ground, I discovered many graffiti depicting animals: oxen, dogs, goats, lions. They were very ancient graffiti, most likely protohistoric, that have nothing in

common with those discovered so far in the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent. It was clear that we had found a specific sign of the beginning of life in Udegram (Ora). The city that Alexander conquered had to be in one of these three places. In order to reach certain conclusions, there was nothing else to do than open trenches in all three places: in the valley, near the ruins of the castle, and then in Gogdara.

Guided by our friends and followed by a noisy bunch of children we started an accurate examination of the site which lasted many days. The most impressive ruins are the ones spreading from the majestic rock dominating over the valley, stretching its grey arms towards the sides of the mountains and then climbing on those tops resembling the dark gold of a fantastic crown as the sun drowns in a sea of fire. The ruins scatter everywhere, peek down from cliffs, and slide on rocky walls like snakes, holding on to one another by paths that merge in perennial springs. It was the abundance of water that allowed the city to resist for a long time to the siege of Mahmud of Ghazni in the 11th century. Raja Gira's castle (the king's mountain or house, the king's castle since the name comes from Rajagiri), though the dilapidated remains have fallen down the slopes forming rocky creeks, settled on the top or hanging on high cliffs, must have been unseizable with ancient means.

Here is how the legend, which might have some truth in it like all legends, started. One of our workers told it to me: he is one of the oldest and almost blind man we called "Pippo" (yet I do not remember why we gave him this name) [Fig. 1.33]. One evening he came and he sat in front of the tape recorder to tell his story. We didn't have to beg him and though now and then he used his good eye to peek at the unusual machine, his eloquent tale did not know a moment of uncertainty. Zairin though, who had to translate the same story in Urdu, seeing the microphone in front of his mouth, would stumble at each word. Our worries ended in a common laughter when they heard their own voices come out of that witchcraft. The story is long but it can be summed up here in a few words. Around the year 1000, the powerful and feared founder of the Ghaznavid dynasty, every year would ride with his cavalry down from the capital Ghazni to crash the last standing Hindu Shahi the Swāt was still a vassal to. The Udegram fort, up high and well supplied, represented a threat on the side, and Mahmud vowed to conquer it at all costs, ordering one of his generals to tear it to the ground. This proved to be a particularly hard feat; the architect who had planned the mighty fortress had skillfully taken advantage of the soil, the cliffs, the voids, and the caves erecting the defenses on the brim of cliffs without leaving any space to the invaders; there were many and solid outer

walls, especially those close to the springs coming out of the mountain in the midst of unreachable gorges. The general attacked over and over again without success; it was then necessary to lay siege to the city hoping that with the end of water and supplies, the defenders would surrender. Yet, after several months, there was no sign of defeat, on the contrary, the besieged inhabitants would now and then make sudden raids which caused heavy losses among the attackers. The general gathered his inner council but nobody was able to suggest a possible solution; on the other hand, Mahmud was demanding that the armies around Raja Gira would successfully complete their assignment because he needed them for other battles. The general knew this and was afraid for his life.

When he least expected it, something unforeseen happened. One day, as he was surveying the walls to see if a weak point in the defenses had escaped his scrutiny, paying no attention to the arrows thrown at him, he was seen by the king's daughter. He was young, fierce, strongly built, and he looked even more handsome because of the golden and silver armor. It happened what often happens in life: the king's daughter was so suddenly struck by love that she could not find rest. She kept this as her secret, but she found a way to communicate her feelings to the general. Love is a folly burning by its own fire. She kept on showing her beauty on top of the ramparts and the general felt touched; he wanted to meet her, listen to her voice and hold her in his arms. But how could he enter the fortress? The princess, through some of her closest people, revealed the secret: the city could not fall because a skillfully dug channel supplied water into the tanks of the castle. It would have been enough to let loose a thirsty horse and this would have stopped beating the ground and neighing on the spot where water flowed underground. The general followed the suggestion; he found the channel and blocked it. After a few days the king had to take a grave decision: either open the gates of the city or attempt a sudden raid to scatter the besieging army. It was decided to try the second option and the people of the city, wearing their best armors, went out with loud cries determined to push back Mahmud's soldiers or die in the attempt. The battle lasted a whole day with ups and downs on both sides; finally, the general was able to create an opening and entered the city in front of everyone anxious to find the princess and take her away. However, as she was coming out of the palace, an arrow hit him and killed him instantly. It seems that the princess, overcome with the shame of betrayal as well as overwhelmed by her loss, committed suicide. The soldiers picked up the body of their general and laid him together with his favorite dog, in a tomb dug at the bottom of the mountain below the castle which was by now all aflame. Still today, people visit the tomb on a pilgrimage every Thursday: the *ziyarat*

is called by the general's name, Ghazi Baba. While Pippo was telling his story, I thought: is this true or is it just a legend? We will never know; yet, that is not so important, because history, if it doesn't turn into a chronicle, it is always a legend.

Hot and humid days followed one another as we steadily pursued broken earthen vessels, traces calling us here and there with that unforeseen and sudden attraction that I love above all things because it saves me from boredom: something I truly detest. So, I do not like to make plans: I let myself be pulled like a child but jump out at the first sound like a cat that comes out form his hiding place, like a game of wit and will between the obstacle of inactivity and the resources of shrewdness. This is why I feel very comfortable in these trips; it is not just because they represent an escape from the masked and conventional rough life we might lead every day, always the same despite the superficial diversity. It is like sinking into the crowd or disappearing into what is common without that hurtful and questionable hope for freedom where man finds himself alone with the light or darkness within himself.

Our search took us far: we often got back to the hotel without having eaten just like it happened the day we went to measure out the Buddha's footprints. There is no place, according to late legends, he had not arrived to; it did not matter much that according to historical records, He had never left that part of India that stretches from Banaras to Patna. As Buddhism spread and monasteries became renowned, it was taken for granted that He would move with that outreach through the air like all saints. Man is not satisfied to feel the presence of God within his soul or by contemplating his splendor; he is scared by the proximity of time and eternity, of what is limited and what is perfect. Man does not want to feel God far away, nor does he want to feel it within himself. The presence of God burns, so man calls some places sacred imagining incredible epiphanies and appearances of the gods. The Buddha has never been to Swāt, yet just before our times, monks spoke of his sojourns there followed by his faithful disciple Vajrapani to convert a demon that lived near the springs of Swāt. The demon's name was Apalala; every year, waking up from his sleep, he would cause lightnings and storms. Fed by the destruction caused, he would then go back into the cave where he came from and fall asleep in its darkness. When the Buddha tried to placate him, he cast against him storms, rains, and piles of stones. Demons, according to all religions, are always restless and have sudden outbursts of anger which grow stronger when they meet a peaceful person. Spiritual calm is the virtue of the strong, a goal hard to attain, just like the magic transformation of this mixture of elements that is

our decomposing body. This peacefulness bothers the demon because he, like the human being, does not like those who are different from him. After a long and useless struggle, Apalala, exhausted, worn out, humiliated, gave up and sought mercy from the Buddha. In order not to starve, he asked and obtained from the Buddha to get the necessary nourishment through his usual devastation every 12 years. This is a legend that has its value, for it explains in its own way the seasonal floods that still take place in Swāt. The monks could show to pilgrims the traces the Buddha left after his coming and, not far from there, a huge rock where the Master placed his shirt to dry since it was all wet by the storm the dragon had caused.

It was overcast; heavy clouds moved slowly across the hazy sky. The first thing we found was the huge rock upon which the Buddha had laid his clothes, and that Stein had already identified. It is a big rough stone like an old mountain-man's wrinkled face; its surface shows parallel clefts which inspired the pious legend to the monks.

A great number of boulders lay all around since the terrific event; the writings and drawings that can be seen on them are silent documents of a thousand years old devotion. On the other side of the river which runs deep as if constrained by the narrow banks, there is another relic lost in the middle of the fields: a huge rock with the drawing of two oversized footprints. When they adore them, the pilgrims would not only gain new merits, but could also perceive what they had already acquired because the footprints would appear big or small according to the devotion of the believer. Since the monks who lived in the nearby temple pointed out the oversized footprints, they would leave every pilgrim satisfied. To avoid any doubt, they also wrote in beautifully 2nd century script that those are truly the Buddha's footprints.

The inscriptions are most important since they answer many questions. Were there probably others carved on the nearby rocks close to this famous and revered site? We asked this question to everyone, old and young, and finally an intelligent looking young man provided us with a precious piece of information: down in the valley, on a grey rock wall, he had seen some letters, though he could not say what they were. The news was too important to avoid any immediate investigation and find out if we were on the right track. It was already late, around one in the afternoon, and we had been walking for many hours, covered in sweat as if we had swam a river; yet, we did not hesitate and kept on moving ahead amidst scattered broken pottery and small green patches of land. Finally, the young man leading us stopped and pointed to the cursed rock wall; it was cursed because the writing was there, but it was none other than the name of an English man,

probably a lone hunter who had breakfasted at the shadow of the rock. On that day, instead, we fasted until night.

Fortunately, as I said above, now the roads are not as bad and dangerous as they were in the distant past according to accounts of Chinese pilgrims. One of the best-known of those reports states: "The roads are rocky and steep: mountains and valleys are dark and gloomy. At times you can proceed with the help of ropes and at other times with chains. There are suspended bridges across valleys and canyons; there are also wooden steps inserted in the rock to climb steep walls."

The river, during the dry season or in its widest part where it flows calmly in the large plain, can be easily waded, today like in the past; then, as it narrows and becomes both deep and dangerous, it is crossed by walkways suspended on both banks just like the ones used today in the Himalayas or in Pamir. In our days there are many safe bridges; and if there is no bridge, you will soon find a ferry.

The Walihadt, when he goes hunting for ducks, he uses a way of crossing the river which must be very old. It is a big rectangular raft made of buffalo skins which are inflated and kept together and tightly bound to a bamboo frame; on top of it there are some beds with their flat surface resting on that frame and the legs sticking out in the air. People crouch on the raft and let those in charge of steering it with long poles, skillfully guide it along the current, manage its speed, turn it, and land. Now and then, after a long ride down the river, they take turns to re-inflate the skins when they realize that they are deflated because they make a splattering sound. Even the buffalo skins are turned upside down and are bound by strings and hooks; when they realize that the skins are deflating, they untie the strings, blow into an opening and without losing any time, they close the leg which serves as a pipe for inflating it. The current is swift and at times it is over 30 km per hour; if it is weaker, it picks up speed near the falls where the raft rises up and creaks, the strings loosen up and water splashes all over. At times that flimsy craft gets stuck on dry rocky areas; at other times it seems as if it crashes, with the skins tearing up and the craft deflating on the bottom of the river. No matter what, it is rather pleasant to be pulled and rocked, moving rapidly along on the waves in the fresh air. The villages quickly pass by and buffalo herds stare at us surprised and annoyed like old ladies who think someone is not respecting them; naked bunches of children storm in the small channels the river breaks into near the banks. We pass in front of the Udegram (Ora) castle where silence seems to hide unspoken tragic events; the bluish sky is enclosed by the top of the mountains which at times seem to be falling rapidly on the river as if to stop it. A placid,

pastoral, almost ritual atmosphere seems to envelope an area which is both familial and nonetheless hiding crumbled historical feats. It is hard to notice the ruins since their color often resembles the one of nearby rocks scattered along slopes and valleys on the right and left of the river; they are the remains of that distant past: like the pillars of a bridge collapsed thousands of years before and now fallen in the emptiness of time.

Now, you can see life resuming with new developments, no longer shocked but actively busy; factories are rising next to ruins and their chimneys sending up twisting columns of smoke in the air. While in ancient times bricks were rare and all buildings were made of stones, now you see bricks of different sizes and colors everywhere: on roads, squares and walls.

Everything has changed; in the old times, when boat people had to return upstream, they would certainly deflate their buffalo skins, put them on their shoulders as they do it in Tibet, and walk for days on the way home. Now though, as soon as we land and regain strength with some tea offered us by the Walihadt, the rafts are loaded on trucks and brought back to their warehouses. In olden times, everything was more difficult and dangerous; with no assistance from any machine, people had at their disposal the unshakable support of faith. They would carve the image of the god of mercy Avalokitesvara on rocks near bridges and dock-ferries; there the pilgrims would stop to pray, offer a flower, and proceed on their journey trusting in his help. One of the most beautiful relief images of this god can be seen on the side of a bolder near Jare, just before Madyan. From here travelers would cross on the other bank of the river to pay homage to the Buddha's footprints. It is an image bigger than normal, carefully carved, although the quality of the stone and natural elements have greatly changed its original beauty. Half of it was emerging from the ground, but I was interested in finding out if at its bottom, like it can be usually be seen in Tibet, there was an inscription. That would have helped us dating it and find a more definite chronological point of reference regarding a piece of art still not well known.

There we found the son of the land owner and begged him to allow us to dig around the stone. Moved by a good tip, he agreed and started working. As we started seeing the throne where according to iconographic tradition the god is seated, we saw an elderly and slim man running toward us; he was wearing a headdress and had a traditional long white beard that was shaking because of his run, the wind, and his evident anger. He was also wearing a pair of sandals through which one could see his wrinkled crocodile-like skin. He spoke first a great deal to his son and then turned

angrily at us for invading and messing up his field. He sounded as if we had ruined him; the century-old attachment to his land burst out of him filled with anger and suspicion; it looked as if one of those divinities meant to protect the fields had descended upon him. Just like one would behave in front of such a divinity in a case like that, we tried to pacify him, but he was deaf of ear and of mind.

Dr. Khan intervened and went to talk to the Tehsildar, chief of the district, and after long discussions we arrived at a compromise: we would give a sum of money to the angry elderly man for the lost land, but we would ask the Wali that the monument be protected and be visible to tourists.

In Swāt, the Pakistan's law protecting monuments and archeological sites and also authorizing the State to expropriate areas after compensation, is not yet applied. We had just chosen the place of digging when we received irritating inspections caused by owners who would not listen to reasons. So, waiting for Dr. Khan to purchase the land, we were forced to pay a huge amount of money for two years' worth of lost crops. The land owners of Butkara were two, but the angriest and staunchest troublemaker was the elder one, a tall, lean and grey man. He knew that he was not bound by any law and held on for a few weeks. Meantime, the corn was growing and becoming ripe, ever greener and taller with time; the leaves were tangled together like fingers of people holding each other's hands in a ritual dance. It seemed as if that vast waving labyrinth of crops was determined to protect the ruins that had now become one with land and resisted us. We returned to that spot every day together with the First Secretary, we would measure again and again, we would argue, and would try to get our point across. Weeks passed and harvest time arrived; when the plants were cut, the soil appeared in its bareness. Then, after seeing us tired and feeling satisfied with the abundant harvest, the old man felt he had won the battle. Then, the digging could finally begin.

In these archeological trips there will always be forced stops: it is enough to enter into a village asking about casual findings and ruins that one finds himself overwhelmed. Hospitality, as I said, is great and almost forced upon the guests at every hour of the day: there is no way of avoiding fruit, or eggs or the ever-present tea. Sometimes we are guests in the palace of a Khan, big land owners and leaders of a group of families, called *khela*; these places resemble a castle with towers more than a palace. Every Khan has his personal body guard heavily armed. The rifles are handy, leaning against the wall in the courtyard. You can tell these people belong to a race of conquerors; automatic rifles have replaced swords, and they come from

a feudalistic, aristocratic, warrior society that in the past would not hesitate to kill or even die for a small matter or for honor.

This warrior spirit has not faded away and we could say that it is still present in the Swāt society; the elderly who have been part of many battles still look and behave shaped by that past. Centuries of history cannot be erased over night; the surviving offspring of armed clans, protected by friends and business partners, still hold on to grudges hard to die out.

Hospitality then is both a duty and the sign of politeness and prestige; at times, it can also be a warning. There is no choice here: people can be friends or enemies. This is the way of tough people. In Europe instead there is a false politeness that wraps everyone like a burial sheet, a conventional life style lacking honesty and mutual trust; relationships are superficial and often melt in a pot of lies.

Swāt did not exist as a political entity until 1926; the tribes, closed in their territories and in mutual hatred, lived in a state of constant warfare that made it impossible for others to get close to the country. Then, the Badshah put an end to the chaos and founded the state.

Despite the peace, enormous castles with towers on the four sides and loophole windows with iron bars, watched over by guards, rising on heights or on major intersections, give the country a medieval atmosphere. Though they look useless and out of place, as left-overs from the past, in the peaceful activity all around, those forts remind everyone of old infightings. Even today, there are some inner fights between families and when that happens, one can hear rifle shots. Love is fleeting, like the slight shiver of a leaf, but hatred is passed down from generation to generation like heirlooms. Death makes them go on. The guide who accompanied me on an expedition, all of a sudden bid me goodbye and left me as soon as we approached a village, because he knew that walking into it would have been too risky for him, just like his adversaries would have to be very careful to enter into his land. Through the passing of generations and the establishment of new laws, these enduring fights and enmities will eventually disappear, but this does not happen overnight. These people have grown in an environment where every corner can hide some danger, every height can have a sentinel; in the past, they would keep on fighting as if the only resource at their disposal was personal courage and the awareness that their life had no value. You can realize this by their strong noses, mouths thin as slit by a knife, the forehead raised to watch out or dare others. To them, mountain or plain is just the same, for their step is always the same. On the steepest incline, thin and slim as they are, they climb up as if they were dancing. As light as deer,

they slide across rocky edges. I keep a good pace too, but when [Abdul] Ghafur, my guide, would climb up the cliffs wearing his tight dress as if he were going to attend a marriage, I had the impression he flew. Those hour-long climbs on the edge of high cliffs which would suddenly change into slides all the way to the valley, reminded me of my childhood. I also have to say that I never fell too far behind Ghafur.

Despite all that, people look very much like us: many dress in European style and if they would not wear turbans, rifles and bandoleers, the *shalwar kameez*, as their wide pants are called, women's cloaks, you'd not notice of being in the heart of Asia. Irrigated fields, farmers intent on their work, cows resting in the shadow, everything seems to carry you back to a world without strange or new things. Beneath this surface lies hidden a social organization rather different from our own: I would describe it as an almost exclusively tribal society. The individual groups that society has broken into are strictly patriarchal, since all of them recognize their coming from a common ancestor. Yet, the collateral and reciprocal kinship of different branches, cause collateral groups of sub-tribes. In order to please everyone, Sheik Mali, one of the Yusufzai leaders who conquered the country in the 16th century, had to divide the farming land among the different branches of a sub-tribe. Given the fact that the land was quite wide and some areas were more productive than others, to please everyone and avoid further bitterness and infighting among these branches, Sheik Mali decreed that groups would rotate in the cultivation of farming lands. This resulted in a rotation system: after a fixed number of years, tribal branches would switch ownership of the land. Sub-tribes form then the main social class which is composed of land owners who gather around them their own clients; these enjoy the benefits of the leaders and, in case of need, share their responsibility with the renters, the farmers, and the different families related to them because they work for them or under them. In Swāt society there is yet another class, not less important, the one of the Sayyid: the descendants of the prophet or other venerable persons because of their virtue. Both are closed groups since they have the same ancestors and are almost exclusively endogamous, willing to give their daughters in marriage to someone higher up in society, but never to someone belonging to a lower group.

Every village is then organized around a landowner and his relatives, but their relationship is not always that smooth. There is then a social system that can be defined vertical and solidly uniform, rooted in the common ancestors, documented by genealogies which are written down or just transmitted orally. Horizontal relationships, instead, have started only

on a modest scale because groups remain closed in their own traditions, occupations, and mostly stable in the same place; therefore, since each one remains in the state or occupation of his parents, a social change is hard to make.

Therefore, if the social atmosphere is still generally the same, new factors, introduced by the needs of economic, social and historical developments, tend to make this situation susceptible to notable changes.

Day after day we have begun to get acquainted with the land and have started feeling at home; walking among the ruins, we have gathered, as if they were hanging in mid-air, the voices of the past and we have been able to link vital elements across the centuries. If you want to get to know a country, you cannot limit yourself to desk work; the work must be connected to direct contact not only with the inhabitants who can be different in their culture and mentality from those of the past, but especially with the places. These sites need to be looked at through the eyes of those who lived there or felt inspired by them. I understand why nature appeared like the Great Mother to many people: each of them looked at it as his own. The sky, the rivers, and the land are not the same everywhere; they are soaked in the life and thought of those who lived there, like islands of immortals upon which, by divine intervention, holds an ancient secret. Places speak in a soft voice; a few ruins or a work of art surfaced on that silent sea are enough to raise feelings, visions or images born from the mutual love of man and his surroundings. Cracks opened by the casual events of history are thus welded. Indeed, there really was a fracture in Swāt.

If we compare Swāt at the end of the past century or the beginning of this one with what it must have been in ancient times, we cannot avoid thinking that the result is an overlapping of two worlds which have very little in common. The population is different not only because when the Pathan descended on it in the 16th century, they cast out the survivors who had tried to hold on to the land like deep rooted trees; yet the slow spread of Islam, toppled the vision of the world and the art. What we ourselves experienced in the West, did not happen here; there, despite the historical and spiritual changes, we still feel connected with ancient cultures and the diversity of the new religion does not prevent us from admiring the art that religions of the past inspired, because we are aware of a unity which is not only geographical but also physical.

Buddhism, which first prospered in Swāt, was instead rejected. Up to a few years ago, every recovered image was a '*but*', an idol which could be used as construction material at most. Yet, no other art could substitute the

previous one. The country was too poor and the resources too few to build, as it had happened elsewhere in Iran, majestic mosques, like an imposing prayer raised by a collective and united conscience to the omnipotent God, nor those mausoleums that make memory of saints; ancient stone buildings, thousands of golden statues stirring the awe of Chinese pilgrims, the floors made of glass paste shining steel rays..., We only have bare brick homes.

I do not want to state that the ancient artistic heritage has died out. Since the times of Buddhism, next to the highest art destined to beautify the most prominent public buildings, there ought to be a dignified and wise craftsmanship especially in wood carving. The woods that covered the mountain area were of fine quality; there is then no reason to doubt that what took place in India where the workmanship of wood or ivory had preceded the one of stone happened in these neighborhoods as well. When Swāt collapsed, old workshops continued to be active and made an effort in producing easier decorations while of course being influenced by new artistic methods that were becoming popular. The best example can be seen in the mosque of Kalam which looks like a foreign building, closed in an impressive simplicity. The massive pillars hold huge beams, 25 to 30 meters long, cut from huge trees. The decorations hand on to us pleasant Gandhari themes that the changing religion has not altered. The decorative style, secondary compared to the immediate construction need, softens the roughness of the building which would otherwise oppress with its harsh, too rigid and basic style. This mosque represents a high point of an architectonic tradition and a craftsmanship technique specialized in wood-carving: it has ancient origins and has grown through century long practice in the midst of a population that disposed only of rocks and woods. The stones scattered along the land, which seems to be completely deprived of smooth and soft soil typical of southern Swāt, lost in the middle of the grayness of its surroundings, and of the often dark and rainy sky, were destined for common buildings: dividing walls meant to keep and protect herds, homes, towers used for self-defense, temples or palaces of local lords; stone seemed too dull for any other use and wood took its place. People, bored by the ever-present and monotonous color of stones, let their creativity loose in the wooden decorations of doors, windows, cabinets, and even in closets meant as deposit of grain or wheat. Surely, the temples or chapels of Dardic populations living in northern Swāt, dedicated to gods whose names have been lost, were made of wood; Buddhism never had a strong impact there or never arrived at all. When there was a change of religion and Islam took over, those people brought into the mosques, taking inspiration from a strict religious concept, their architectonic and decorative skills.

The Kalam mosque can be aptly compared to the ones of Bahrein. There are two mosques there, one for the summer and the other for the winter: big halls with the ceiling sustained by decorated columns. On some bases there are flowery motifs where stems and leaves give way to sketchy lions. Buddhism had placed lions on top of columns lifted near stupas to remind people that the words of the Buddha, which can overcome all heresies, can be compared to the roar of a lion that can silence all the sounds in the forest. Islamic Iran shared in these areas its long and rich symbolic use of the lion.

These wooden mosques, with ornate designs, almost divided into different sections by symmetrical lines of columns, are not only the expression of a dream or a fantasy, but of a linear concept. People spend their whole time there, in the dark and in smoke, during the winter; at the usual proper time of the day, they quickly gather near the window facing Mecca serving as a *mihrab*: the geometrical simplicity, a rigid outline, and a basic form do not suggest the search for beauty but the desire to assert strength and the representation of human solidarity in the house of God.

In southern Swāt, besides the mosque which houses the body of Akhund, or of others built more recently, the village mosques are very modest constructions that can hardly be distinguished in the midst of homes. Since the use of stones has disappeared, Islamic architecture has not been able to substitute anything of its own to the Buddhist one.

In northern Swāt, instead, traditional craftsmanship remain faithful to ancient materials and the continuity of wood carving has never been interrupted; even more, as the years go by, the skills have been honed, and the decorative motifs increased through popular and folk ambiance.

2.1.5 The Discovery of the Ancient Capital

The investigation of almost all the stupas was concluded in two months. The enthusiasm was not as the one of the first days: our habits were gradually quenching our initial excitement because the search for buildings seemed endless; since we had given priority to the most important monuments, what was left were just minor details and, with nothing new or no surprises, a certain kind of monotony fed by the heat made our exploration less active. On a day that had been more tiring than usual, while resting under the shadow of a tree, I do not remember who of us mentioned that if we did not stop soon, three new stupas would have been built next to the old ones to bury our remains or commemorate our efforts in Swāt. It was an admission

of our being tired but it was so sudden that we laughed our heads off while a group of nearby kids looked at us both worried and surprised as they kept an eye on us a little suspiciously while munching on some apples; they looked at us with a little apprehension for an instant or two, and then they also burst out laughing without being able to stop because they were now sure that we had become crazy: nothing short of that could happen to people going around in the fields to fill their pockets with broken pottery.

Still, these stupas, all bare, collapsed, with no inner walls and yet standing like trees in their silent acceptance of their fate, caused a great suffering in me. They looked to me as the incarnation of patience and sacrifice that Buddhism teaches: giving up all your goods for the good of others, getting rid of all you have to share with those who do not, just like the Buddha did in his past lives, like the Bodhisattva of the past continued to do, and like the present ones and those who will come in the future will continue to do.

The villages are built in stones cut one by one; the split in the construction gets bigger with time and then finally the building collapses like a dead body. Sometimes buildings hang on and resist winds and ice to shelter a family of farmers that has built a hut against it. There was one such hut where lived an old man with a long beard and wearing his turban on a slant: people told me he had chosen that place believing a treasure was hidden therein. I asked him if it was true and he didn't answer. The following year I went back to speak with him again, but found out that he had died.

We had accomplished much, but after so much work there was still a big problem to solve. Those who did some sort of research in Swāt before me agreed in identifying the capital the Chinese pilgrims called *Meng chieh li* (ancient Man ga li or Man ga ri) as Manglawar, a village approximately 12 kilometers North of Mingora. When I went to Swāt for the first time, I did not doubt of this fact known and accepted for many years. However, I wanted to find proof of this by analyzing the territory, especially because that transliteration did not seem to completely match the name Manglawar. For a few days I crossed the fields up and down around Manglawar, walked through the alleys of the village, questioned the farmers, but except a big stupa a little outside of the residential area, I wasn't able to find any carved stone nor that abundance of broken pottery that is always the sign of an important archeological site. Even on the nearby slopes I couldn't find evident signs of ancient forts which could not be absent in the capital of a state that had been subject of continuous invasions for many centuries. So, I started doubting and began to convince myself instead that the city described by the Chinese must have been in another place. There was no

other name besides Mingora that sounded similar to the one used by the Chinese, and such a place was even better suited to be a capital. Mingora is today the richest bazaar and the center of commerce in Swāt; it is in a wide irrigated valley protected all around by mountains on whose tops and sides lie terrible and iron-gray ruins of well-built forts. The exam of the terrain proved me right: in the fields, after some recent showers, one could see the multicolor mosaic of broken pottery which looked like a blossoming unable to get off the ground. There were mounds of dirt pointing to buried ruins everywhere. The city existed, it was there underneath, it was hiding; ruins seem to have the modesty of death. The river betrayed its secret: the unpredictable and rough course of the Jambil River took the city from its underground life by unearthing and scattering the ruins of its walls for almost a kilometer along its banks. We could not doubt any longer: the capital was right there on the two banks of the Jambil River up to the other river springing forth and taking its name from the sacred mountain Ilam. The hypothesis of my predecessors were falling: the capital described by the Chinese grew over the centuries in Mingora, and we should not talk any longer of Manglawar. Thus, something else became possible: near the city, according to another Chinese pilgrim (Sung Yun), there was a big, probably the biggest, Buddhist monastery in Swāt. He calls it Ta lo; once a year, monks from all over the country would flock there hosted with magnificent hospitality by the king. It was a monastery around which sprung up chapels and monuments decorated with golden statues, but we should not take this information literally. The statues could very well be about six thousand, but they were not golden for sure but just painted gold, just like the ones that last century Major [Harold] Deane bought in the bazar in Mingora and like the ones we too unearthed in our diggings. Yet, on an archeological site so vast, our difficulties seemed to increase. I had the impression that the best course of action would have been to dig up a huge pile of ruins not far from Mingora which looked like a collapsed stupa. It was in the midst of green fields under the sun; farmers had built a small house on the top to keep watch on the crops covering the site as a trembling and shiny curtain. It was half destroyed and had been used for decades as a stone quarry, but it was still towering over the surroundings with its torn down walls. The name of the locality is Butkara; the name was another hint since *but* in Pashto means idol: this means that most statues being exported from Swāt in those years were coming from that place. In Mingora like in Udegram (Ora) the problem was solved. There was nothing else to be done but to start digging.

2.1.6 The Excavation in Mingora

Here I should venture into the tangle of different stages of my research and the results reached in a period of seven years. I fear it would be too long and too technical, so I have left it to Dr. Faccenna to whom I have entrusted the excavations in this area; he will write his complete report in some highly documented volumes which will be published soon. To a scientist involved in this kind of research, the most important virtue is certainly patience; this in turn is constantly challenged by curiosity which is always awake and unsatisfied. Curiosity burns with the desire to move right away, without any delay, from what is known to what is not; it would like to read in an instant the excavation as if they were mixed pages of a book about the past. Patience instead contains curiosity, disciplines it, and forces it to move step by step to avoid fascinating but useless leaps. Sharp and careful observation gets used to point out one by one the signs of the past, to identify the different times by examining broken pottery, to perceive in the wounds of the soil cut out by digging the overlapping, the changes, the pauses and the new beginnings, to reconnect the broken links of a chain connecting the present to its beginnings. This way, ancient events slowly come to light like some night skies that brighten up because of the shining moon or stars.

What has come to light in Mingora? First of all, a huge stupa, one of those buildings that Buddhists shaped in various ways to enclose in their secret recesses the relics of their saints. They had a square or round shaped base surrounded by a walkway so that pilgrims could walk around it; on top of that base there was a semi-spherical dome with on top stone disks. As it is common in India, the architectural shape reflects a complex cosmological symbolism: an image of the universe as seen by the Buddhists, a clear allusion to the movement from multiplicity to the One that each believer must complete. Only part of the structure remains of Mingora's stupa and one can clearly still read in it the six different reconstructions. The oldest stupa, built on a piece of land where there are traces of even older homes, turned narrower toward the top like a dome; as usual, inside there was a squared open space, a kind of box made of stone boards meant to contain the vase holding the ashes of some holy person. Unfortunately, the monument has been desecrated and there were no traces of relics within it. The exterior surface was rough and crude: big stones, pebbles and stones are laid horizontally with pieces of stones filling the holes.

In another age it was enlarged, adapting around the previous building a wall almost three meters thick; the new construction had no base, but

its semi-circular shape served as a support to the dome. The technique, though, went through big changes. While the part below was still made of coarse material, the dome turned in an even way and it was covered of cube like structures of dark-grey coarser rocks one next to the other with no cement. A third stupa included the previous one but it was built in the same manner of the dome and it was covered with plaster. The story of the building does not end here: a fourth stupa, built with talc [talcschist] blocks carefully cut wrapped itself around the previous one. Then, the fifth, overlapped the fourth through a wider wall. All around it there was a corridor used by pilgrims for their traditional devotional rounds by keeping the sacred monument to their right. The floor was made of coarser rocks with some squared tiles of different colors, green, yellow, blue, and brown taken from a previous collapsed building, giving new brilliance to the monument; now, only the bare frame of this structure is still standing. Its surface was covered by painted stucco; at times it was decorated with flowery motifs, and at other times with worshipping figures and just a few fragments can still be found. It takes some creativity to imagine the wonder such a view would have offered visitors: the stupa in the middle surrounded on all sides by hundreds of minor stupas all covered with domes and these by umbrellas, resembling a marble forest grown around a gigantic tree, and this same building displaying columns, streamers, low-relief carvings, and golden statues. The sun would bounce on those sparkling surfaces and highlight the images that depicted the life of the Master and stirred both the devotion and the zeal in the heart of pilgrims.

Just around the 4th century there was a terrible collapse. We should not think of a man-made event; the terrible disaster turned everything upside down, carried away broken walls and fragments of sculptures twisting them in opposite directions, brought together pieces coming from different parts, mixed broken pottery and dirt with different other objects. The result was a confused, shapeless, shattered mass. All this leads us to think that it must have been an earthquake or one of those floods that since ancient times have often swept through and tormented Swāt. Needless to say the devastation impoverished the country to such an extent that it wasn't able to rise again; nonetheless, the venerable tradition over the sacred place motivated the survivors to rebuild the monument. They leveled the torn walls and hid the smaller stupas under the ruins; then, they started rebuilding the last stupa as well as they could, without its base, using the material left over and broken sculptures. The upside-down fragments piled up or fallen everywhere, served like foundations for the new improvised new buildings. The land was so full of ruins that when in the last century interest in old objects, and this particular form of art in a special way, started growing because it was

less foreign to the west than the one from India, Butkara filled the shops of all antique dealers of the whole sub-continent. It was such a rich source of relics that even after repeated careless pilferages, we were still able to find much. Butkara seems an art gallery, a storage, a hidden museum because of the high number of unearthed sculptures (seven thousand to this day): some are still whole, while others, because of the collapse mentioned above, are broken and could be easily restored, then there are others that are shredded. The reconstruction I spoke of above caused the end of an era; the sacred area continued to exist for some time as a site of pilgrimage, but then slowly it fell apart. It was probably already abandoned at the time of the Islamic spreading because no object or ceramic of that Ghaznavid period was found in the area that was dug up. This is the last event of the great monument whose beginnings are fairly certain; some coins found in the third stupa indicate that it already existed at the times of Menander (140 BCE or soon after), a Greek king who took pleasure in philosophical arguments at the manner of sophists with the monk Nagasena; during his time, another stupa was built near Bajaur and restored by a Greek governor. Yet, this was the third stupa: so, there is nothing strange to imagine that the first one was built by Ashoka or soon after him. Since he had annexed Afghanistan up to Kandahar, it would be unthinkable that he had not also conquered the Swāt since it was from there that roads merged toward Jalalabad and Kandahar.

2.1.7 The Sculptures

The sculptures that were surfacing were evidence of the ancient links that connected for long and winding roads this part of Asia to the Mediterranean world highlighting the cultural solidarity that brought together the peoples of the Eurasian continent. The art called Gandharan or Indo-Greek [Graeco-Buddhist] or Indo-Roman did not spring up spontaneously: it was the result of a meeting between the artistic ideals of the Hellenic world surviving in the eastern regions of the Roman Empire, and Buddhist spirituality. Greek artists arrived in Asia after Alexander and they were already in Bactria where the Achaemenids had already confined Greek prisoners; Greeks were not that few even in Kandahar at the times of Ashoka if this emperor had carved on stone in that city a short edict where the Greek text comes before the Aramaic one [see Zellmann-Roher and Olivieri 2019]. In these areas where one could hear the voice and see the presence of the West, invasions or incursions from the North would occasionally take place bringing with them Indian religiosity; Buddhism

would gradually revise itself and attempt to adapt to different people: it would adjust to their spiritual needs and their way of expressing themselves in the arts; it would also tolerantly welcome ideas, fables, and liturgies that were not that different with its own fundamental principles. So, a new theology was born and from that a new art where diverse beliefs met and merged one into another: classic, allusive and narrative Hellenism together with the practical, rigid, and confrontational one, and then the soft and sensual Indian one.

More than once I asked myself if Buddhism could have had such vitality, take up that variety of forms and schools characterizing it, translate itself into such rich and ever multiplying, increasing, splitting imagery, if it had not spread on these frontier provinces. It could not continue to speak the monastic and ascetic language of old schools without risking to become sterile. It met ancestry of different cultures: Greeks used to give human forms to their religious intuitions. They also met the Iranians who were insisting on the dichotomy of good and evil or light and darkness as two inevitable opposing forces that last until this battle ground which is the world exists. The Iranians introduced that mystery of light as the expression of life and knowledge that could easily be linked to the philosophy of light not unknown to ancient Indian schools of thought; they also suggested new and more evident symbols. The Kushans, a large leading group of warriors and conquerors, being tolerant and out of fear of restless divine forces, practiced great religious freedom and allowed the presence of the most diverse divinities in their coins; they even exalted their own leaders by implicitly identifying them with the gods from whom they believed they came and by whom they were protected; the sun, the moon, Mitra, celestial divinities and their fine interpretations were increasingly welcomed by the crowds. The humblest groups of society, while accepting the new religion and paying attention to the words of its own ministers, could not forget their old beliefs coming from their initial awe or fear, nor could they abandon cultures which were at first conflicting but now lived side by side: hunters, shepherds, and farmers. These people worshipped gods of mountains, storms, hunting, life giving forces of nature moving toward Shiva or flying gods in the air capable of taking up animal forms, or the Great Mother, who evenly distributed both life and death. These ideas lived with, met, and merged into one another giving rise to new rich experiences and religious forms, a blossoming of rites and myths suddenly touching Buddhism and forcing it to react not in opposition but by accepting and transforming that vast religious world.

Hellenism appears in this art not only in the image of the Buddha or Vajrapani in the western form of Apollo, the philosopher, or Hercules, but also with cherubs holding flowery wreaths, scenes of people resting outdoor, soft lands, gods with spears, the hair dress and profile of some women, the movement in people kneeling down, crowns of columns with acanthus leaves showing their shapes and shadows. The people lined up in those plastic narratives seldom display that indifference that can be seen in the work of a craftsman who just copies what others have done. Many of those faces show a living person with specific and unmistakable traits as the ones an artist could see along trade routes or in bazaars. The figures do not show anonymous or conventional crowds, but a society where each person shows his or her own undeniable uniqueness. We can detect a study of reality highlighted by the dignified standing that cannot be seen in Indian art where the anxiety to represent first of all the inner longing, changes the form or deprives it of what is personal. This stress on details, at times, brings the artist to overdo it, and then instead of a portrait we see a representation. Still, the artist goes even further. In such a sacred place, he doesn't mind to bring a profane touch. Love scenes are quite frequent in Hindu art and at times they reach a crude representation of reality or show such offensive details that people discuss how such erotic scenes could find a prominent show in sacred monuments.

Even Buddhists, in later periods, as it happened in Nepal and Tibet, accept the same style to express strange mystical or theological ideas though their principles are quite conservative. Gandhara art has rarely represented naked figures. Yet, in the works unearthed in the excavations at Swāt we found the opposite: not only naked people show up, but scenes of love abound; I am not saying that they reach the level of the reliefs in Khajuraho, but for sure the first stages are shown with no fear; clothing drops and kisses flow with the woman at times already naked. Clearly, in Swāt there was a freedom of practices that in other parts of Buddhist India people would not dare show. That was the country where women had an authority and prestige unknown in other areas, a country where women were experts in magic arts and potions. In fact, soon after, when because of that poverty caused by natural disasters or invasions or the end of trade, big monasteries did not exert any longer their authoritative opposition to the sprouting of popular rites, Swāt became the country of complex esoteric practices where women took a privileged place of prominence. This local setting made it easy to welcome those playful and erotic scenes so common in the Hellenistic art. In some carvings appear long bearded men and prosperous women indulging in offering each other goblets of wine

because those people were used to drinking even before their encounter with the West.

The Buddha is shown in the events of his many past lives or in the last one, or in his preaching after the Enlightenment described by sacred writings with much creativity to move believers.

Though Buddhism has never been laden with dogmas, on the contrary, it allows each one to live the words of the Master in his or her own spirit in complete freedom, the Buddha's image, once taken shape, is passed down from century to century and from place to place. Doctrine becomes in time a dialogue between the remote preaching and the new historical, spiritual settings; it shines with new lights, it gathers new experiences.

Words acquire new meanings or depth according to the shifting reality: form captures the lost image in the fixed stability of an unchanging symbol. Yet, around that fixed image drift centuries of life: princes and traders, ladies and maid-servants enter into the figurative story seen in architecture; they were destined to remain forgotten in time if the people then living in Swāt had not taken the place of those in the legend. Everyone, slowly moving into the unrepeatable past, imagined himself or herself as an active viewer of the ancient miracle; thus, the present, under the influence of devotion, flowed back to the beginning and gave art an earthly and human value, and the legend changed into authentic experience.

The ideal merging of ancient times and the present, in the intensity of prayer and devotion, would rise to a longing of happiness outside of time.

2.1.8 People's Life

I wouldn't want people to think that I have been mesmerized by art work which cannot detach itself from the society that produced it. Religious experience and its following express only one face of a culture, though religious longing towers over other aspects of society. Around a religious building and, on the same level, there was a thick net of homes that were first destroyed and then rebuilt with other purposes; then, under the pure soil, there were traces of ancient dwellings, round constructions made of big pebbles laid in a rough way. These seemed like traces offering the first glimpses of a human world which for its own bashfulness would be destined to disappear in the common pit of emptiness. The homes clustered one next to the other appeared to be lying under the shadow of common ancestry; they turned around a courtyard and had a kitchen at its center:

they were particularly significant because of the sacredness of the fireplace; in a corner still rested fragments of the pottery used to collect water. Deep wells with walled sides, usually paved floors, and small drainage channels diving into road-side ditches give the impression of a well-ordered society. A careful look at the urban setting shows skillful experience and habits that died out in the subcontinent over the centuries. Ceramic gradually improved to such a level that during the 1st and 2nd century it become truly elegant; it gained a polished and soft shine; its color was a deep red which revealed western influence. In a home, the squared fireplace with the edges made of talc is probably the remains of what was the furnace of a goldsmith.

Centuries have passed, governments changed, religions took each other's place, but the life style has remained the same; even today the goldsmiths in the villages of Swāt use the same kind of furnace and, squatting near the fire, hit on the talc block the golden leaves and the jewelry with unchanged patterns. The earrings you find in bazaars repeat ancient models. So, in Butkara, in this immensely vast sacred area, we have the proof of the economic prosperity of the country, of its devotion, of the craftsmanship responsible for constructions and decorations. It is the proof, if there was any need for it, that there was a dignified and experienced craftsmanship in Swāt whose main drive came from the religiosity and the magnificence of the rich or from the pilgrims coming from all sides of the Buddhist world. Just like any other religious building, Butkara reflects the wealthiest group of society, of aristocracy and traders; it was the expression of the prestige and power of monasteries.

The sacred area offers us a partial look of Swāt's life, the side that mostly interests the history of art through its imposing architectural remains, the rich decorations, the display of colors and gold now gone that give portraits a certain bright movement. A society though is not made up by rich people only; its structure is also composed by craftsmen and farmers. What were the conditions of these people? They haven't left neither monuments nor documents worthwhile remembering. The modesty of their life remains silent in the homes with brick walls leaning on stones, their closets for ther few possessions, the small dirt-floor bedrooms facing the kitchen. Not even the tombs have remained because the Buddhists cremated the deceased; it is the same world that today we can often see at the borders of big Asian cities or villages, where life moves on and leaves only ruins and washed down earth. At most, in a corner, you might find an earthen vase used as a piggy bank or pieces of poor women's jewelry, bracelets made of bones, glass or copper; these bright accessories were meant to give the impression

of a wealth that was often dreamed of but never reached, quite different from the jewels and precious stones shown off by prosperous people in their statues. Besides, Buddhism was never able to completely overcome the beliefs that had preceded it; local people continued to worship the Great Mother that had many names and shapes, the goddess of fertility, the one that gives life to the earth and nourishes it, but it is also feared as the dispenser of death. This can be proved by the many small terracotta statues representing it as a naked woman with large hips and abundant breasts. Next to these sacred images of protective gods, we found a large number of fragments of domesticated animals: they were probably toys, but the horse probably had a religious meaning.

2.1.9 Other Monasteries

During the long journeys across Swāt, half way between Butkara and the tiny village of Panr, I had noticed another place which seemed very interesting. The ruins are almost all the same and what is underneath cannot be seen; habit though shapes a sixth sense that, even more so than aerial views which can only provide a picture of the bare frame of a building or a few dwellings, can perceive under the earth through immediate vibrations, the presence of something no machine can detect.

In this place which is also called Panr, the environment changes completely. The valley slowly rises towards the mountains, the terrain fractures into broken pottery and splits in sandy cracks or sits on top of frail furrows. A lonely, green, monk-like tree here or there draws attention to the degraded surroundings and might point to a nearby spring. This barren, dry, stony, washed up land is called *mera*; it cannot be called dirt, but a shapeless soil where the green appears only if the benign sky gives it life at the opportune time. Man persists in tilling it, sowing it, and waiting that God remembers him. This terrain has the shape of waves that chase each other among uncertain beds of dangerous creeks which, soon tired down by their anger, leave cracks in the ground that become deeper every year.

On top of a knoll sits a hut lost in the middle of that desolate land, guarding a small field a few meters wide and barely green.

Even here rose a monastery built around a holy building; on the edge of the hill there was a row of smaller stupas, half still standing because the washed down junk from the top has wrapped them in and the distance from other centers have protected them from the thieves that regularly visit

the monuments closer to inhabited centers. There, we have found some statues of women similar to the ones found in Mingora: we didn't find any more a style reflecting the Hellenistic world, but the Indian influence appears again in the infinite nuances of its Great Mother that old dwellers had shaped into small terracotta statues.

There is a completely different dignity of style; the original stiffness turns into a soft movement of dance. These woodland divinities have taken an earthly appearance: artists represented them wearing clothes, with the hair style and accessories of the women of that time. Instead of looking at a procession of goddesses, you see a parade of full-fleshed ladies.

Sometimes women dancers are used as models. The everyday world takes possession of the divine one. Sculpture is no longer the image of ancient beliefs or prayers, but it is the sunset of a society that wants to show itself and become immortal in those images before disappearing forever.

The decoration of big Buddhist shrines in Sanchi and Mathura probably arrived up here through the ivory carvers whose works spread all over the world: from Afghanistan to Pompei, where a beautiful statue of a goddess of Fortune confirms that even the Romans had a taste for oriental objects.

2.1.10 Udegram

The purpose of the excavation in Butkara was to define the aspects of Buddhist sculpture during the Gandharan period. In Udegram (Ora) our research had other objectives; we wanted to find the city that the handful of Alexander's soldiers conquered, and then follow up their initial settlements up until the conquest of Mahmud in the 11th century.

The first place that attracted my attention was the plane next to the road on the right of those who go toward Saidu Sharif: the land is covered with broken pottery which the rain, washing it, makes it shine in a reddish sparkle typical of Kushana vases. In fact, after the first attempts, we found the walls of a wide neighborhood that five different digging expeditions directed by Prof. [Giorgio] Gullini have largely brought to light. The area is divided into well-defined islands of dwellings, built according to a detailed city plan, crossed by paved streets, with drainage channels and rows of shops on both sides; there are also residential homes with a front covered yard with pillars and wooden columns the bases of which have been found.

The city was started in the 4th century BCE and died out in the 4th century CE going through frequent stages of social arrest or deciline caused not so much by wars, but by natural calamities. Seven levels, corresponding to different historical periods, show that the city started over and over again with different plans. The ruins cross each other and overlap. Still, the story of the events, the witness of the changing social and historical conditions, or the incoming influx of new peoples are not entrusted only to the difficult language of walls or the structure of buildings. The extremely rich findings of vases and the great quantity of silver, copper, and even gold coins date in time the different periods of the city. The first tribal coins give way to the Indo-Greek ones where the Hellenic divinities alternate with the Indian ones; then, those coins disappear at the arrival of those minted by the Kushans who had come down from central Asia though unable to remove completely the Greek alphabet and the Indian languages because of the long lasting mark left by Hellenism in this part of the world.

The final collapse happened in the 4th century because of a tremendous flood that, like others quite often before, erased almost any trace of life in Swāt. The survivors rebuilt the city on the slopes of the mountains around a fortified castle that must have been the palace of the chief or governor. At this point things get complicated again: eighteen sediments overlap each other in an intricate way that has more than once changed the layout of the buildings as if man, indifferent to all kinds of disasters, could not leave from there. There is then continuity of life between the city in the valley and the castle that gradually grows, widens and reaches the peak of its fortune between the seventh and the 10th century when the majestic entrance staircase was built. (This probably took place when the Hindu Shahi were in power; they united under their empire a vast land that stretched from Kabul to beyond the Indo and had its winter capital in Udabhanda, now called Hund). The staircase has an imperial look; the flights rise slowly and are paved with large slabs of gravel. It is more than four meters wide; it follows the edge of the cliff and leads to the entrance of the fort, leaning on the ruins of previous constructions. From the top it gains a view of the valley and the mountains that reach the Mankyal.

Mahmud conquered the fortress in the 11th century; in the front yard where was the main door, some skeletons are proof of the violence of the battle and the desperate defense put up by the inhabitants of the fort. Prof. Gullini has also recovered the skeleton of a woman with a knife in her fingers; even in Udegram (Ora), though in a smaller scale, women sacrificed themselves like Indian women were used to, instead of falling victims of the invaders.

The fall of the castle marked the end of a civilization. Buddhist and Hindu communities started a definite end. The ceramic of Samarkand or of Iran and an exquisite copper lamp with a writing in Kufic symbols of the best Ghaznavid period are proof of the changed customs and probably of the population. Peace though lasted only a short time. Allaudin, the "arsonist", after tearing to the ground Ghazna, took possession of the castle of Udegram (Ora). Later on, Genghis Khan went to India chasing the king of Chorasmia, Jalaluddin, who chose to avoid being captured by diving with his horse into the river and drowning; on the way back, the Kan's bands looted Udegram (Ora).

Just a little South of the castle, on a strip of land half submerged by the flood, there is a rocky area where there are drawings of animals of various kinds, drawn in a very simple and sketchy way, similar to figures in ancient Iranian ceramics [Olivieri 2008].

These graffities reach several meters underground and prove that the place was inhabited since prehistoric times; some of the first Indo-Iranian migrant groups penetrating into Afghanistan to settle into the subcontinent probably lived there. Over the centuries, with minor changes, settlements continued in the same place. Once man has chosen a place where to live, he will occupy it forever; there might be temporary departures from there, but, unless life conditions change drastically, the return is guaranteed. Even in this place, called Gogdara, the same thing happened. The excavations next to the drawings on the rock have shown the different times people lived there; in the deepest level, a thick piece of black ceramic with geometrical designs has been discovered, similar to prehistoric vases in the Caucasus. The site, probably inhabited since the 2nd century BCE, gradually rose on nearby hills, settled on the rocky top, and was invaded by Alexander. Still, where was the city of Alexander? In the valley of Udegram (Ora) and on the ridges of the hills which protect it all around, there are traces of three big centers. Which one of these saw the Greek soldiers, which one was conquered by them? Every story which is not proved by evidence can be a myth or a legend; the show of certainty comes from what we call a document which becomes voice and word when it is given in a report. The two then are one and the same thing, light from light. It was sufficient to see a small fragment of ceramic there bearing three Greek characters, found in what Professor Gullini has called the bazar, to give us the impression of being next to Alexander. I said three letters: "*nou*". Prof. [Giovanni Pugliese] Carratelli believes a Greek man carved his own name on the side of a bowl in the 4th century BCE: because of these three letters, the story told by Arrian becomes a poem.

Between the bazar and the fortress excavated on the top of Gogdara, there are centuries of history. Greece briefly showed itself there, not with its smile of art nor with its knowledge, but with the folly of arms. Yet, that was the first meeting that, through previous gradual steps, led to the flourishing of Gandharan art.

What name do we give these people? Where did they come from? What language did they speak? Continuous migrations multiplied the interactions; Buddhist bas-relief are galleries of different ethnic people. This crowd though has disappeared into emptiness. Cremation and the scattering of ashes, introduced by Hinduism and Buddhism, have used the funeral rite to make complete disappearance something sacred. In Buddhist and Hindu communities everything is consumed into air and under the sun; there are no shadows or underground dark places. The tomb instead is the refuge of the desperate hope of the living, terrified by emptiness; it is the door of an abyss or a heaven where people continue to live. Sometimes the deceased brings into the tomb his own things and even people close to him, to keep all of them close in the heartless architecture of his eternal home. The tombs then are not just an extension of human illusions, but an opening into the civilization and religion of a people, the most certain sign of their ethnic traits which is imprinted in the sign of skulls. Death is not a wall dividing two different mysterious realities: it is a meeting point of light and darkness; life reaches it, falls into it, and loses itself into it. Yet, even after thousands of years, death is shaken by soft vibrations of life that resemble a seed that centuries have not rendered barren: from the underground appears the shadows of ancient people in the unmistakable form of their skeletons. The most urgent task was to look for and find the necropolis.

Swāt, as proved by the excavations in Udegram (Ora) and Gogdara, did not begin to exist with Buddhism; even before its arrival, there were peoples probably belonging to different ethnicities among whom, especially those living in the southern part, the predominant one was the Asvaka, “the ones on horses”, against whom Alexander fought and, as usual, prevailed. However, while Buddhism left imposing monuments, we cannot even see the traces of this more distant past. Still, those people must have had shrines, places of worship and forts; in fact, Greek writers spoke of these places situated up on high and hard to reach, settled on the mountains and well protected. How is it possible, I thought, that all this has completely disappeared? Naturally, we cannot expect that at that time, aside from their fortresses, there were huge and important buildings; villages of those times probably looked like the many villages we can see now all over Asia: clusters of huts and small homes made of dry walls and a roof of straw or

a mixture of branches and mud. Where were the cemeteries? For sure the ancient people of Swāt did not cremate the deceased or did not use only this method; the nearby Iranian and Scythian world might lead us to believe that they left the bodies of the deceased on top of the mountains or in secluded places. These customs, though, leave some traces; funeral practices, even the most essential and simple ones, demand complex ceremonies and rites meant not only to ensure the departed a smooth journey into the after-life, but also to prevent them to return and harm those left behind. So, thinking about this I began to walk over the well-known countryside where at first, I had gone looking only for monuments going back to the times of Buddhism. Now, I was examining the ground in a different way. Human settlements, usually, do not spread that far; that is because they are compelled by practical reasons, such as the need for water, the closeness of pastures, the fields easy to irrigate and till. Actually, we could say that villages and small towns remain fixed in a place; thus, over the centuries, huge piles called in many parts of the Orient '*tepe*", "*tell*", "*dheri*" appear on flat planes or open spaces. They have the shape of low ridges or mounds where life seems to have settled down with enough forbearance capable of enduring all sorts of human violence and giving up only to the heartless bitterness of the weather or the forced long absences of its population as it might have happened during the times of devastating invasions when, together with people, even the soil dies out and the desert with its sand takes over the fields.

Even today, looking at the ridges, the dunes, the knolls where houses of modest clusters are built, we can realize that those low hills are not natural but they are thousands of years old remains of human presence. Since the climate in Swāt has remained unchanged, near a village rise the ruins of Buddhist buildings. These did not spring up in the middle of nowhere, but they had taken the place of previous and more ancient buildings. We could also say something more about this. The places a religion takes possession of are never completely unexplored or never inhabited before; from the very beginning on, sacred spaces are handed down though the centuries because remote fantasies had discovered the divine presence in a rock or in a tree. Over the centuries, Buddhism settled down and built a monastery there, then a stupa, carved a statue to comfort and guide pilgrims. Even when Buddhism became corrupted, declined, and finally deteriorated and disappeared, that site was taken over by the tomb of a Muslim saint.

So, I started again examining the terrain, beginning exactly from the places where there were more signs of Buddhist presence and there were more visible remains of an intense civil and religious life. Humans have

always chosen a peaceful restful place for the deceased, far from the places the unknown and anguished living carry on the ever complex and fleeting history; yet, these places are never that far from the city of the living and the two were never that far to remain inaccessible to one another. Besides the link of memory, there is a visual connection between those who are still within time and those who are outside of it; the departed are placed in places which help their gradual dissolving away. These places are comfortable, exposed to the sun, on solid ground and not easily reached by water. One day, going through a field near Charbagh, I noticed a small ridge that the river had cut right through. On top of it I could see smoke coming out of three or four homes and on the opposite side there were black walls typical of Gandharan architecture. I got close, I carefully examined the bank the river had sliced, and discovered big slabs of stone stuck in the muddy soil that seemed to enclose a tomb. As usual, the good Zairin was accompanying me; we both considered the layout of those stones and measured their depth looking at the surface cut by the water and the bank. All of a sudden, though, we had the impression that we were not alone any longer. In the countryside, in Asia, nothing remains out of sight; even when you are in a deserted place and you believe being all alone, all of a sudden you might find next to you someone you do not know where he came from: out of the void and in the middle of nowhere a man takes shape, and nothing announced his presence. In places where people live, you are followed by thousands of curious eyes spying on you from behind a tree, hidden behind a bolder, or from the rooftops. When you least expect it, you are surrounded by a silent crowd following very attentively every movement of yours. Of course, children are always the first ones, and look at you filled with wonder as well as amusement as if you were a toy suddenly fallen from the sky to interrupt the monotony of their life. Then, you have to break the barrier of that silence and start a conversation; first, since they are always full of suspicions, you have to state very clearly what you are looking for. “Here there are tombs – I explain – very old tombs of people who lived in this hill many centuries ago. Do not be afraid. It is not a desecration to open some of them and see what’s inside; they are not tombs of Muslims, but of people of another religion, and this has nothing to do with you. By the way, have you seen tombs like these nearby?” This is it. The land owner, with the customary politeness, assures me that right under his house and all around it, digging for the cultivation of the land, he has discovered a large cemetery; the tombs are all alike and they are laid out in the same manner, like spokes of a wheel, on the clay soil surrounding the ridge. Some, on the side of the river, have been uncovered by the tides. In these tombs there were only bones and pottery, but no precious objects.

He told us all this taking a short deep breath, because sometimes, in these parts, people have found small treasures of golden coins, and gold is something everyone likes: especially here where there are no rich people.

"What have you done with the pottery?"

"We broke it. There was only hard and solid earth in them; it felt like a stone. We broke every vase to be quick. We kept one in the house; I kept it because it has a nice shape".

"Do me a favor; go and bring it here. It wouldn't be too useful to you now that you can make even better ones, right? To me, instead, one vase, only one, if you really found it in the tombs, would save me a great deal of work and lead me on the right path".

He agreed and after a short time he returned with a magnificent goblet, large on the sides, called "brandy glass"; it was gray with a soft zig zag decoration all around. The similarities with Tepe Hissar II A and Siyalk A in Iran on one side, and the Russian findings in Turkestan on the other are evident. We are now certain. A tomb which we dug up right away with the aid of Zairin and some volunteers who worked full of energy, left no doubt. Then, for a few days, my investigations moved from the Buddhist monuments to the necropolis. One after the other, I discovered 12 of them; three have been partially surveyed and have already provided us sufficient information on the protohistory of Swāt. We started by digging up a cemetery not far from Butkara, along the valley of Jambil, where the ancient inhabitants have left the secret of their city for the deceased along the terraced yellowish clay slopes. In 1961, Dr. Maurizio Taddei uncovered many tombs containing rich funerary vases [Butkara II]. The necropolis shows two kinds of burial methods: some tombs contain the curled-up body; others hold the burned remains in a terracotta jar. They used a simple cremation and then, what was left, was deposited in the jars. The two kinds of tombs, at times square and at other times rectangular, are covered with stone slabs (most of the times three) and almost all contain numerous funerary objects of two kinds. Some vases are gray-black, others red, but both are very elegant, though decorated with very simple ornamental patterns. These multiform ceramics were made with extreme care and often found inspiration from metal items. The tombs contained either red or black ceramics, with the frequent characteristic that where we found black ceramics, there was at least one red vase, and in those where we found red ceramics, there was a black one. The reason for that is not still very clear; it is a fact, though, that the style of the ceramics is uniform,

and there is no great change in one or the other, as if the tombs belonged to similar cultures.

In 1962, the investigations were extended and two more necropolises in two different locations have been uncovered: the same accessories, the same copper clips, and a greater variety of vases were found. Very often, we found multiple burials: this led us to think that some people were sacrificed to accompany the deceased in his or her journey in the afterlife. The examination of the bones buried or burned seems to suggest that this fate might have been especially reserved to the youth: the jars containing the burned remains of women were decorated around the rim with patterns similar to a necklace. Almost always three holes in the jar were meant to allow the departure of the soul or represented solar worship. Later on, funeral rites became more refined: the victims destined to follow the deceased were substituted with terracotta images representing beings that are neither men nor women. The lid of a tomb used a handle in the form of a horse. In another necropolis, two skeletons of horses were recovered next to the deceased. The belief that these burials belonged to the Aspasioi of the Greek sources (Asvakayana in the Indian sources) should not be doubted. Peoples we first knew of only through few literary sources, now gained more concrete and accurate credibility; we know how they buried their dead and their cultural ties. Going through a patient study of comparison and juxtaposition we shed more light on their religious beliefs. If the horse gave them a name (*aspa* in ancient Persian, *asva* in Sanskrit, and *assa* in Prakrit mean horse) it will of course have a religious significance: maybe an allusion to the sun. A new field of research is opening: the work of the archeologist will be accompanied by the naturalists and technicians. Exams using C14 will be conducted to verify, through indirect data, the chronology. Samples of soil where the skeletons were laid will be tested to find out if they were placed there naked or dressed; if they were dressed, we will have to discover if the clothing was made of cotton, wool, or leather. In addition, we have to find out if they cultivated rise, wheat, or grain and what kind of domestic animals they had.

This kind of collaboration will contribute to give an identity to this culture living between Iran and the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent. Looking at the material we have discovered so far, it appears like a culture ready to be absorbed or forced to modify its own customs because of the arrival of a new culture or a new religion which caused the change of previous funeral rites we have described above: if this is the case, then we should think of the spreading of Buddhism. Now, though, it is too early to suggest something definite.

What's the relationship between the people buried in the necropolis and those whose remains are in Mingora under the sacred area or in Gogdara? Do they belong to the same period or are they far apart from each other and belonging to different groups? We wait for other excavations and new discoveries. For now, I would tend to accept the second possibility. It is known that there were successive migratory waves of peoples in this part of the world: on the northern borders of Swāt there were the Assakenoi of the Classic souces (again the Asvakayana in Indian sources), the Aurdayana who came from the north or North-West and gave the name to the country, the kings of Mingora who, at the times of the Chinese pilgrims, claimed they come down from Darel. It cannot be excluded that these people joined an even older ethnic group (Burushaski?).

This country, surrounded on all sides by mountains that claim some of the highest peaks in the world, is right in the middle of two roads which are long and difficult to travel on, but cannot prevent human daring; these two roads, to the East and to the West, were constant means of exchange of ideas, customs, artistic taste, and trade between Central Asia and the Indo-Pakistani subcontinent. So, it happened that in the 8th century, when the Tibetans became a great power and claimed from China the rich provinces of Central-Asia, and the Arabs started appearing on the scene, because of those two roads, Swāt found itself in the midst of a diplomatic, military and strategic struggle between China and the Arabs, as well as between China and Tibet. The kings of Swāt, faithful to the Celestial Empire, created an obstacle to the Arab invasions and in exchange received from the Chinese the official investiture of their country. Then, since the Tibetans' pressure increased after they had overcome Baltistan, Swāt switched alliance to the Tibetans; because of this change, the local dynasty paid a high price since the Chinese proclaimed the Turki Shahi of Afghanistan, who had remained faithful to them, kings of Swāt. The huge and dangerous crossing of Pamir and Hindukush were not enough to keep Swāt outside the struggle of the two giants; still, monks from Swāt kept going to China and Chinese pilgrims continued to flow into Swāt. That is why Chinese interpreters could be found in Swāt.

And we reached the end. Tibet, Greece, and China led me to Swāt to examine the monuments and determine if there were proofs of the hints I had found in some literary sources. The ruins spreading all over the country have confirmed my hypothesis through their testimony. The excavations have breached a huge opening in the wall of the past. Now, even Swāt can tell its own history; of course, there are some gaps like in every story, but it can also avail itself of evidence which was unknown

until today. This distant country is not only connected to us by the ancient migrations of peoples of our own ethnic group – the Dardic people – but also from the great adventure of Alexander the Great that followed the ways of the Achaemenids who were set to create an empire functioning as a bridge between the Mediterranean sea and the Indian Ocean. Buddhism welcomes the Hellenistic artistic language and makes it its own. The legend of Shakyamuni unrolls plastic commentaries which bring Greek manners and patterns on the banks of Indo. Religions, anxious for centuries to find in the divine immanence a lost innocence, exchange their own revelations enriched by light and redemption. Those areas have become a site where West and East meet in such a manner that it becomes hard to point out where one begins and where the other ends.

Let us not be deceived by the exuberance of Buddhism that, through the great number of its monuments, might lead us into an incomplete and inaccurate assessment of pre-Islamic Swāt. Even Buddhism hides a merging of diverse cultures, the coexistence of numerous ethnic groups, the clash or meeting of various religions, the survival of certain ancient models which, chased down at the bottom of the collective sub-conscious by the changed historical and spiritual settings, settle down, yet are ready, to resurface to the light under sudden impulses, like a voice that does not want to die out.

In this recurring survival hides a rivalry between nomadic and sedentary societies, which cannot be but extremely old: marginal beliefs have sometime resisted to Islam in certain tribes in Kohistan, inhabited primarily by Dards or similar people. These tribes, locked in the mountains or in remote valleys, have handed down stories of a cultural world that even today find similarities among peoples farther North, from Gilgit to Chitral. For them, not even the "*dakini*", witches flying in the air, have disappeared: they have had the strength not to give in to Islam and with the name of "*rui*", "*hapirei*" "*peri*", are still flying in the air, like the ones met by the Tibetan pilgrims. Thus, farmers and shepherds came down from mountain to mountain from the west: Iranians, Greeks, Shiites, and Turks followed each other, mixed and merged in a tangle difficult to unravel, in the midst of disappearances and sudden returns, ravaging storms and prosperous peace times, in front of a mighty and indifferent nature. How and when all this took place, we will only be able to ascertain in the future.

After all this, I am still what I was and I have not become an archeologist. I am more than ever faithful to my studies of oriental philosophies and religions though anxious to walk those ways where, through mindboggling events, Asia and Europe, in their ups and downs of meetings and contrasts, of declines and renewed growth, exchanged the best of their ideas; political

events brought them closer even when, despite their ineffectiveness, they caused wars, clashes, or prepared and sustained trading inroads. In the midst of this all, those roads aid the meeting of spirit which redeems terror, blood, looting, and go beyond the collapse of empires, just as the storm cannot hide the sun forever.

Now my journey is no longer in space. Lack of trust and suspicion close borders; uniformity in manners and habits, the monotony that binds us, the denial of uniqueness that drowns everything, the inhuman overflow of our living together, the wearing out of that endurance that a contemplative person can usually show in front of the intrusion of crowds, make our days desolate and mere dust by the too common assumptions. There is no more solitude because everywhere there are people spying on you, poking their noses into your life, even in the recesses of your thoughts and heart. To travel now, when the world is becoming so uniform, is like roaming a hospital filled with dying people; sudden glitters of old habits vanishing in a storm of dying sparks. Therefore, the last thing we can do is going back in time, and wake up the dead.

There is nothing else to explore on earth; after Tibet and Nepal I have ended my explorations. Even there everything changes. Now that the Orient is absorbing our poison, there is nothing else to do than to go back to the past. Since this means that we have to deal with shadows and images, our soul is at peace. The rest does not matter.

2.1.11 Historical Notes

At the end of the brief adventure of Alexander, Greek princes who had rebelled to the Seleucids ruled Swāt. They had their own fortresses in Bactria. The governors of provinces were given the Greek title "meridarchs", like that Theodore whose name is on an inscription mentioning some of the works he had done to honor the memory of Buddha. After that, there were a number of tribes form central Asia pushing each other toward the fertile rich lands of the sub-continent: Scythians, Parthians, and Kushans took each other's place. We have a list of names, lots of coins, and a considerable number of inscriptions: chronology, though, is always uncertain. This change of empires – the biggest and long lasting one was the Kushana which lasted until the 4th century, though we know little about its latest events – took place during four or five centuries. Yet, just before the definitive collapse, they began to give in to the first pressure of the Sasanians, broke up and regrouped, and finally disappeared. Then came

the Hephthalites, followed by the Turki Shahi. These were followed by the Hindu Shahi who ruled first from Kabul and then from Hund on the Indo river which, coming down from a semicircle of mountains, opens suddenly onto an uneven rocky desert: it was a powerful reign that had already gone through the first incursion of the Arabs in Afghanistan, and had been weakened by those rivalries that have never allowed India to build a stable empire.

The Turks finally came down from Bukhara: Alp Tegin (962), a Samanid general, and then Subuk Tagin, a slave of Tegin, had settled in Ghazni managing to establish a kingdom which grew in Afghanistan and then in Iran. Sabuk Tagin was succeeded by his son Mahmud (he reigned from 998 to 1030). His son, though, had other ambitions. He made Ghazni the capital of his reign that soon became a big empire. Stirred by the ancient thirst for prey, inherited from his ancestors, he repeatedly moved into the subcontinent with his cavalry trained to strategies which took the Indians by surprise; after a brave but disorganized resistance, the reign of Shahi, standing alone in those formidable attacks, not supported by other Indian princes who would later lose their independence because of their jealousies, finally collapsed. Swāt, which had been a province of the Shahi, fell into the rule of Mahmud too.

The events that took place in Swāt after the conquest of Mahmud are not certain; there are some facts known to us in the midst of much void of information, but there is such a lack of connections that we cannot see a unified history. Mahmud left his own armies and a few generals in the castles he had conquered and rebuilt to protect the country. The inhabitants did not convert to Islam right away. Conversions probably started in the most important centers, but the resistance of the populations in the countryside attached as they were to their own worship must have been strong; Tibetan pilgrims bear witness to this; in the 13th century they still found Buddhist practices and maybe even Hindu traditions. Only archeological findings point to the Ghaznavid presence: coins, vases, and lamps that were found in excavations or occasionally in the fields.

Swāt followed the fate of the Ghaznavid. When these gave up to the Ghurids, who come down from the mountains North of Kabul at the time of Alauddin “the arsonist of the world” (1151), it changed ruler as well. Then, came the incursions of Genghis Khan when he pursued the retreating Jalaluddin to the banks of Indo (1221). After all this, there is a void that we will probably never be able to fill: there are no documents and even archeological findings could help us since the country lived in absolute poverty. The population continued to decrease; old homes were replaced

by new ones made of bricks and huts were built leaning against ancient palaces. Most probably, what happened in the past took place again; each village was more or less independent under the rule of a more authoritative or rich family. Everything seems to point to the fact that the population, slowly conquered by Islam, though not completely and with small resisting Hindu groups, lived in a way similar to the one in Nuristan or Chitral, countries with which the ancient Swāt shared a profound similarity because of race, language, and customs: this is documented by stories told by Tibetan pilgrims who visited Swāt at the time of Kublai as well as by studies of ethnologists.

It is only in the 16th century that we have some more definite information and can see a new historical setting. Of course, even for this period, scant are the news that are certain and supported by written sources. We have to use indirect and occasional reports or rely on oral traditions left by the Yusufzai who, at that time, conquered Swāt from a local dynasty, the Jahangirs, sultans of Swāt. These were probably the descendants of populations that by now had become completely Muslims: yet, they were expelled and perhaps forced to seek refuge in the modern district of Hazara because of the continuous incursions of the Yusufzai at the time of Malikk Ahmad around the first quarter of the 16th century (1515?). At this time, when the new comers had taken control of the vast territory, two important events took place: first, there was the famous census of the region entrusted by Ahmad himself to Sheeik Mali; then, the distribution of the lands to the Yusufzai and the tribes connected to them. Other lands were given to the Sayyids, the descendants of the prophet or venerable masters, to form a kind of protective belt to avoid trespassing into someone else's land, or the dangerous greed, or even other possible reasons of conflict between clans. In this way, the Yusufzai consolidated their territory, which was much more fertile and productive of the ones they had lived in before. Still, the improved living conditions did not quell the love for war nor the ever-present rivalry among families, always ready to make peace as soon as some danger threatened their independence. Swāt remained then a locked and inaccessible country and Akbar himself was not able to enter it. In the North-West countryside, in order to feel safe on his right side on the way to Kabul, he tried several times to control it, but he only managed to create some inconveniences causing greater resentment from the tribes. The worst military expedition was the one in 1585. He had sent an expert general called Zain Khan, son of his nurse, against the Swāt who, through his well-known military skills, had managed to set up an advanced position in Chakdara close to Malakand. The hard campaign had weakened his troops and he did not have the confidence to enter into

Swāt nor to face the fierce tribes; thus, he asked for reinforcements. Akbar agreed, but he had the unfortunate idea to entrust these troops to one of his favorites, the Brahman Birbal, and Abdul Fateh: both were poets, great speakers at court, but completely inexperienced in military matters, and on top of that very presumptuous. They opposed the prudent counsels of Zain Khan who intended to bring the war right in the heart of Buner; they also believed that the emperor did not have in mind a complete conquest, but only a punitive expedition. Zain was forced to give up. Just like he had foreseen, after they had sustained many losses crossing the Karakar, the march back through Buner ended up in a complete disaster. Birbal lost his life and Abdul Fateh was barely saved by Zain Khan. The Yusufzai were so proud of their success that they organized disrupting expeditions into the camp of Akbar and Attok. It was a shock, and Akbar tried again to defeat them without any success. Zain Khan was ordered to begin a new military campaign against Swāt and Buner from 1587 to 1592, but this campaign was not successful either. Swāt, aside from occasional incursions, did not suffer any loss and did not lose its independence.

Later on, not even Ahmad Shah, who had freed Afghanistan from Iranian rule and united it under himself (1747), was able to take over Swāt. The Sikhs, who soon started claiming Peshawar from the Afghans, gave up any attempt to invade Swāt too. After the Sikhs, a few years later, came the British; other events were taking place in Swāt where a respected and holy man, Abdul Ghaffur, born in 1784 in northern Swāt, had gained much esteem. After many years of meditation, he had settled in Saidu Sharif and had gained much prestige. His wisdom touched people's heart and everyone was seeking his guidance. Soon, people saw in him uncommon qualities and called him Akhund, the Master: master in the spiritual sense, the guide, the one who teaches the word of God.

In 1857, Sayyid Akbar Shah, who had valiantly pushed back the Sikh, died. Though he didn't have the title, he had been the leader of the Yusufzai and was the descendant of another famous holy man, Pir Baba. It was a difficult time for the choice of a successor because right at that time there was the uprising which shook the British rule in India. It was then decided, and it seems as if Akhund agreed, not to elect as a leader, Badshah, Mubarik Shah, son of the deceased Ahmad Shah. Then, Mubarik Shah, out of vengeance, joined the uprising. He was first defeated in 1858 and took refuge in Malka, and from that fortress, on the ridge of the Mahaban range, he launched a series of assaults against the areas of Mardan and Swabi. The British could not just watch, and in fact intervened. Thus, began the 1863 campaign Neville Chamberlain was in charge of. There were bloody

clashes; both sides proved heroic and honorable to such an extent that, as we read today about those battles, they seem to belong to another world. When we recall the events of the last world war or the ones that followed it, or we think about the other tragic ones that might take place on earth, whether innocent or guilty, we might have a feeling of despair as if so many thousands of years of history have not been sufficient to teach us anything. Humans seem to be overpowered by a cruelty probably much worse than the beasts: it is a cold, planned, shameful cruelty because people pretend to justify it with politics or justice.

Gradually, after the humanitarian dreams of the past century, we have gone back; barbaric methods are re-surfacing, unrestrained by a culture based only on the mind that cannot touch the heart. Modern people, despite their continuous speaking of charity and love, reveal themselves as the least gentle and most cruel people that have ever existed.

Instead, those British and tribal soldiers fighting each other had learned to respect each other; they had learned, most of all, to be generous and humane.

Facing higher weaponry superiority, the inhabitants of Buner were forced to seek peace with the British who granted it with the only condition that Malka be demolished. Then, the British Commissioner, Reynell Taylor, together with a few officers and modest patrol, accompanied by a hundred Buner leaders, among whom the most prominent was Zaidullah Khan, who had lost an arm and an eye in the previous battle, going through the territory that once belonged to their enemies, went to supervise the demolishing of the village, as it had been agreed upon. Nothing happened to him; Zaidullah Khan, who had given his word that the terms of the agreement would have been respected to the last detail, was able to rely on the honor of the tribe to calm down the uprisings in the villages that threatened to destroy the small group. After that, Buner and Swāt closed themselves in and no westerner was able to put foot there until a few years before the beginning of the new century. The tribes remained practically autonomous because Akhund's leadership, as we have seen, was mostly of a religious kind. He was able to use his prestige to maintain a certain balance and rule events through his authority; this power, though, rested only on counsel. The country then was not that quiet and continuous uprisings, vengeances, and counterstrikes threatened it.

The British started to take a more active role in 1895. They were concerned about Russia's political activity in central Asia, and were worried about what had taken place in Chitral, a state of non-Pashtun people. They had a

good relationship with them, but once, when the British leader residing in Gilgit travelled there to assess the situation, he was ambushed by someone who claimed to become king, and was supported by the *malik* (local leader) of Bajaur. The British, wasting no time, sent there two battalions. The first, taking the same way of Zain Khan, conquered Malakand and went down to Chakdara; then, they held talks with Nawab, and were allowed to let their troops pass through the state of Dir and reach Chitral from the South. The other battalion moved out of Gilgit. Thus, the frontier was extended, the Chitral was protected, the Dir was recognized as an autonomous state, and the Malakand district was founded. Swāt remained the same as before; actually, things had become worse after the death of the Akhund because the spiritual succession was claimed by his nephews after the death of his sons. Finally, Miangul Shahzada, the father of today's Wali, managed to restore order in the country, to rule, and quiet down old resentments. In a short time, through his wisdom, political keenness, courage and prudence, he was able to create the state of Swāt which included Buner, Kohistan and some parts of Dir as well as Chitral. It wasn't easy at first because he was opposed by the great nephew of Ahmad Shah, the Sayyid of Pir Baba. This one enjoyed the prestige given him by the religious tradition of his family, from the shrine of Pir Baba, and from the memory of his great grandfather's accomplishments against the Sikh. Swāt, refused to acknowledge the son of Ahmad Shah as their leader. Now, his descendant, though at first elected spiritual leader even of Swāt, was unable to stand to the pressure. In fact, the situation in Swāt seemed to be getting worse and turning in favor of Sayyid of Pir Bar after the death of Akhund.

Miangul Shahzada had won. He pacified the country, organized it, and started that work of modernization that carried to the progress described above.

Swāt is in that area of Pakistan that was once called tribal land, and it is governed by an autonomous administration; it has its own police force and army. It enjoys a considerate independence, still under the supervision of Pakistan. Pakistan still believes it not appropriate and immature to change the British order which had left the border tribes under their own armies, and overseen by a Political Officer. The main task of this officer was to act as moderator among the different rival groups, to keep an eye on the borders, and to check if there were any inappropriate land grabbing or suspicious incursions. Even after the proclamation of the Pakistan Republic, things have remained the same. Any change would create new problems. The frontier tribes are just a few miles away from Afghanistan which demands the formal establishment of an autonomous state that should unite all the

Pashto speaking peoples (Pakhtunistan), including those residing in this area. A revision of how things presently are would imply great expenses to build new roads, schools, hospitals and improve the standard of life. The situation will have to improve by itself, with no rush.

Among the border countries, Swāt is the best one for its good administration, for the majority of its wide, paved, and well-kept roads which are easy to travel on at different seasons of the year, for the good health care services, and for its educational system. In fact there are many hospitals, clinics, primary and secondary schools. Some good colleges have been built in the capital and attended by many students from Pakistan because the teaching staff is excellent, with an easier and more comfortable life. The Wali is doing his best to promote education; schools are open to everyone, and the youth can sustain final exams, opening their way to university without spending too much money of their own.

2.1.12 Twenty Years After

The reader of the new edition of *The Path of Swāt* has realized, I hope, that this book is not just an account of my journey, nor the description of a country, but rather, the story of an exploration and the transcription of Swāt's past events beginning three thousand years ago. This work, at the same time, advances the suggestion of a research to be done in well-chosen locations in view of solving, one after the other, the most relevant problems and doubts that still need to be clarified; then, the historical events of a country with such a rich culture and story can become increasingly clear in the haze covering the past of every place on earth. This is exactly what has been done while comparing the results of the excavations done in Swāt with the ones seen in neighboring countries, such as Iran, Afghanistan, Central Asia, India, as well as with, the help of Chinese, Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Iranian written documents, whenever they were found.

We can now say with a certain degree of certainty that Swāt was inhabited by Dard tribes that came mostly from the North and lived together with ethnic groups whose origin we are not sure of; if there were no migrations of people from the west, cultural influx from there should not be excluded; these people spoke an ancient Indo-Arian dialect that still survives in other dialects besides the ones in Chitral, in Gilgit, and in Baltistan. The most important witnesses of the earliest times are the tombs (over six hundred discovered so far). In most of them one does not merely see barren bones, but an abundance of funerary ceramics that exhibit the

simple and yet praiseworthy taste of a people that did not lack creative craftsmanship; by looking at them, one can imagine the sorrows and the devotion people experienced at the moment of definitive separation, like what we see in certain tombs where the skeleton of a young woman lies united with the one of a more mature man in an everlasting and loving embrace. Why?

The big cemeteries of Loebanr (1500 BCE) Katelai, and Aligrama have been the first to shed light on Swāt's life; then, even more importantly, we have the dwellings made of stones which were repeatedly destroyed and then rebuilt one on top of the other. These constructions caused such great wonder in the Indo-Arian migrations that Swāt was known among the Veda as Suvastu (from there the name Swāt) "the country of beautiful homes". The oldest homes in Aligrama are of the same period of Leobanar's tombs.

In Gogdara the rock has been chiseled to make as smooth a surface as can be obtained on an easily fragmentary stone; in prehistoric times, people skillfully hit the surface with stones to trace pictures of dogs, felines, and cows together with war carts and banners: a visual description of the world at that time. It was a sacred space visited for thousands of years and when Buddhism prevailed, it took possession of it not by erasing those graffiti, but carving on top of them a beautiful figure of a meditating Buddha. Buddhism, more than other religions, has always left unchanged the signs of more remote religiosity, aware that in places where people have prayed for centuries, that sacredness cannot disappear.

Ever since the times of Ashoka (3rd century BCE) Buddhism stirred such religious piety that Chinese pilgrims were able to count four thousand monasteries; this number does not only show the deep faith of people, but their wealth as well. Almost all Buddhist schools of thought were represented there; along the walls of stupas there were sculptures and bas relief describing the best-known events of the Master's past lives, or the experiences of his latest earthly apparition; these were so well decorated that the pilgrims believed they were made of gold. Chinese pilgrims counted almost six thousand sculptures in a temple called Talo. This temple, most certainly the one of Butkara, excavated by Dr. Domenico Facenna, is a never ending treasure of sublime works of art. There are not only statues made of schist or plaster, standing or sitting in meditation, but also long series of '*legenda aurea*' and fragments of paintings showing the faithful with their hands joined together in an eternal prayer position. These are treasures which will be mostly showcased in the Museum we have asked to build in the Swāt capital, and partly given to IsMEO, as previously agreed upon, and now displayed at the Museum of Oriental Art

in Rome. Butkara, which was destroyed six times and six times rebuilt, is a signpost both unique and precious to appreciate the art exhibiting the meeting of Hellenism from Asia Minor and enriched by its ancient links with Iran, with the exuberant fantasies of India. This encounter gives voice to the serene and silent meditation of the Buddha while adding narrative excitement to the story of his work on earth.

Then there is the monastery of Panr, now almost completely excavated by Dr. Faccenna, [Faccenna 1993] or the one next to the Mission in Saidu Sharif (Saidu Sharif) which still waits for the anastylosis of its columns and the exploration of the monastery attached to it [Callieri 1987, Faccenna 1995, Olivieri 2022a]. This will mean ten or twenty years of excavations by archeologists.

In Udegram (Ora) [Gullini 1962] excavations focused on two directions: at the bottom there were the ruins crossed by a tangle of alleys, passageways, drainage canals, a vast area we have called bazar, a large cluster of homes going back to the times of the Mauryans (3rd century BCE) where we have found the fragment of a vase bearing the Greek name of its owner. Above this area there is a lonely knoll with terraces showing the foundations of the majestic castle which was built on the hilltop to keep watch and defend. It was the palace of kings or governors accessed by a wide and steep marble staircase, symbol of prestige and power. It is not over, yet. Not far from the sacred area of Mingora rise two huge piles separated by a deep stone wall which is probably an acropolis. The tests for a research project, to be done in the future, have revealed the long history of this site because of foundations of huts and later buildings which had their highest development during the times of Kushans. Time will tell.

To conclude, Swāt is rich in archeological and artistic findings stretching from three thousand years BCE up to recent times. When Islam conquered the region, the artistic traditions obtained and never quashed through the centuries, adapted to the needs of the new religion; from that time, there were no more human drawings, forbidden by Islam, but arabesques, floral and scroll like ornaments, unique and inventive patterns rising from unavoidable limits, though resembling subtle calligraphy trying to cover every free space available. The wooden mosques substituted the stone stupas and monasteries; the formless curvilinear decorations took the place of thousands of statues and base reliefs that were previously standing thick in sacred places when the teaching of the monks of Swāt and pious settings attracted Buddhist pilgrims from different parts of the world; knowledgeable guides told devoted faithful wondrous tales of the Buddha's flying journey there to defeat and convert an awful and fierce dragon who

used to destroy all the crops with terrible floods: once he had tamed the dragon, the Buddha left, but his footprints can still be seen there, as we have said above.

Naturally, an excavation demands another equally important task, which is restoration. What is left of the tombs, the dwellings, the wells, the granaries, the monuments, the convents, the pillars or columns mounted by a lion, symbol of the Buddha's voice that wins all other sounds and renders them mute, all of this should be restored in a scientific and wise way – I am saying restored and not redone – or it would be better to leave everything under the ground, where it would lovingly be protected. Restoration is the natural conclusion of an excavation, and has to be done with the most appropriate precautions, provided by the most advanced scientific tools. Even the tombs, where the dead have been awakened from thousands of years of slumber by the diggers, as well as the ruins of homes, can reveal to a careful investigation a few mysteries of ancient times, and suggest hypothesis concerning religions, social organizations, events concerning migrations, eating habits, hunting practices, and domesticated animals. In this investigation, which will surely be long, patient, and scrupulous, the archeologist will make room to the paleoanthropologist, paleobotanist, paleo zoologist, and all those who in some way or another, aided by the most sophisticated instruments, can advance new elements to provide a more accurate understanding of the true physical and social environment those people lived and died in.

For those who want to know more in detail what is being done, and our initial drawn conclusions, I deem useful provide here below a summary bibliography documenting the contribution offered by the Italian Institute for the Middle and Far East [IsMEO] to better understand a still far-away country that was already known to the Greeks and to the Chinese; it is a country where two cultures, the classic western one and the Indian one, met and influenced each other.

2.2 Tucci and Swāt, Seventy Years Later

Luca M. Olivieri

Preamble

Giuseppe Tucci, some twenty years after his first tour to Swāt in 1955 (1958), and his *La via dello Svāt* (1963), presented a first re-assessment of the major research themes on the cultural history of the valley in a seminal essay entitled "On Swāt. The Dards and Connected Problems" (1977). Almost all the themes touched in that essay were further elaborated (as can be judged from the bibliographic production of the Italian Mission); many found new supporting or counter arguments based on subsequent archaeological fieldwork.

What made Swāt so important in the eyes of Tucci, were the voices of the Buddhist pilgrims and monks, and before them of Alexander's historians. What makes Swāt so important even today then? In the following notes, we will see that the 'exceptionality' of Swāt and of frontier-regions like Swāt, is not that of being places where opposite movements diluted into each other (think to the "East and West" of R. Kipling), rather it lies in their cultural and spiritual uniqueness.[1]

1 Chronology and geography can be complex matters. Therefore, we included here a simplified Chronological List that can help follow the different historical periods; the Maps and the Illustrations with captions throughout the text will instead aid the reader to familiarize with the landscape and locations. N.B.: The following pages are largely drawn on on my previous contributions that appeared in Olivieri 2019, 2021, 2022a, 2022b, 2022c, 2023b, and also in Callieri, Filigenzi, and Olivieri eds 2015, and Olivieri and Iori 2021.

2.2.1 The Protohistory of Swāt

Ancient genomics of Swāt (see Figs 2.7-2.9)

> *"These people worshipped gods of mountains, storms, hunting, life giving forces of nature moving toward Shiva or flying gods in the air capable of taking up animal forms, or the Great Mother, who evenly distributed both life and death".*

See above p. 166

Amongst the themes touched by Tucci, one should give particular attention to the question of the Late Bronze – Early Iron Age graveyards, now more correctly labeled as Swāt Protohistoric Graves (SPG), but also to a few early historic burial features, which, initially presented by Taddei and Tucci (1977: 23-25), have recently found fresh unexpected evidence in the newly discussed site of Butkara IV (Olivieri 2019). A new element to be considered is that "recent studies and fieldwork [...] have changed the [Swāt Protohistoric Graves] chronologies (c. 1200-800 BCE) demonstrating that there are no SPG features posterior to 800 BCE" (Olivieri 2019: 231).[2] The corollary of this datum is that there is no direct relationship between the end of the Swāt Protohistoric Graves phenomenon (inhumation) and the diffusion of Buddhism in Swāt, being the two factors separated by at least five centuries (ibid.: 232). In this sense, the new results are correcting what earlier proposed by Tucci. But here we are dealing with another aspect of the question: the ancient peopling of Swāt.

One controversial point in Tucci's essay "On Swāt" was the "Central Asian connection" of Late Bronze – Early Iron Age Swāt. In particular, he linked the ethnonym and the toponym "Massaga," capital of the Assacenian confederacy that, according to Alexander's historians, was peopling a region associated by literary sources to the Dards.[3] Such claim raised much criticism by those who stressed "that the Dardic tribes settling in Swāt were Indians, and the Massagetae were most proably Iranians, so, they should be clearly distinguished. These reproaches are not well founded" (Jettmar 1995: 36). The issue, despite Jettmar's favourable opinion, remained controversial, and it was somehow put aside in the following thirty years. Today it has gained new elements, thanks to a

2 The new radiocarbon dates (25 new AMS-C14 dates) are published in M. Vidale, R. Micheli and L.M. Olivieri 2016 and V. Narasinham et al. 2019).

3 The term Daradas is well known in the Indian sources, and – as self-definition - in royal rock inscriptions from the Upper Indus. In the Graeco-Roman sources the term (with variations) is quite recurrent to define the region and/or its inhabitants.

project of genetic study that would have been even unconceivable at the time when Tucci was discussing these issues.

Although the possible association Massagetae/Massaga remains obscure, and possibly unprovable, Tucci's intuition of this "Central Asian connection" can be better understood after the recent publication in *Science* of the results of the largest study on the ancient genomics ever attempted so far (Narasinham et al. 2019). The research, led by Harvard University and other institutions, reported on the genome-wide DNA study of 523 individuals from the last eight millennia from excavated sites from Central and South Asia, from the Eurasian steppe to Swāt and Sistan (the easternmost regions considered by the study). In the study were incorporated 126 individuals (25% of the total) from sites excavated in Swāt by the Italian Archaeological Mission, including 99 individuals from sites of the Swāt Protohistoric Graves complex, 21 from early historic burials, and 6 from Medieval (Islamic) graves. The research project was complex, and involved a highly structured level of expertise. The implications of the overall outcomes of the study (for linguistics, anthropology, and archaeology) are far from being absorbed by the scientific community. It will take time and many further studies to balance them and make them useful for the advance of a shared knowledge on the "Silk Roads". The study "[u]sing data from ancient individuals from the Swāt Valley of northernmost South Asia, show[s] that Steppe ancestry then integrated further South in the first half of the second millennium BCE, contributing up to 30% of the ancestry of modern groups in South Asia" (Narasinham et al. 2019: "Summary"). Further evidence indicates that "we can assume that the Central Asian and Iranian pastoralist-related ancestry of the Swāt historic population [...] predates the SPG phenomenon (c. 1200-800 BCE). Admixture dating suggests that the date of mixture between Steppe pastoralists from Central Asia and the local inhabitants of NW South Asia occurred almost one thousand years prior to the sampled SPG populations. For the post-SPG period in Swāt, the genetic analyses detect [...] no substantial influx of Steppe pastoralist-related ancestry, and [...] the increase of the South Asian component or *AASI*." (Olivieri 2019: 252). The third important aspect offered by the study is that genomics demonstrated three millennia of substantial genetic continuity since the Bronze Age in ancient Swāt. That means that from c. 1200 BCE to c. 1200 CE the valley of Swāt was *grosso modo* inhabited by a stable cluster of population. For example, the individuals inhumated in the sites of the Swāt Protohistoric Graves complex and those deposed in the few early-historic burial sites (like Butkara IV, the largest multiple burial monument ever discovered in Swāt and Gandhara) shared the same genetic ancestry. "In other words,

the individuals of Butkara IV, as well as the other coeval individuals (from Aligrama B and Saidu Sharif I), were largely derived from the same ancestral gene pool of the Swāt Protohistoric Graves individuals, albeit with a modest amount of additional admixture from populations from parts of South Asia with higher *AASI*[4] ancestry that accumulated over time. This increase (possibly via the maternal side?) is possibly part of a gradual and slow process of 'Indianization' [...] that proceeded side by side with the diffusion of Buddhism" (Olivieri 2019: 252).

Agriculture and economy

> *"Narrow valleys are streaked with the smoke rising from villages and the fields are almost always green with crops; there are two wheat harvests, then one of rice and one of corn before the cold weather brings in a change for the worse all around".*

See above p. 143

The "substantial genetic continuity" detected in Swāt by genomic studies, is in fact of the utmost importance when seen in the context of what is, all considered, the limited eco-system of Swāt. As we will shortly see, such eco-system, although physically limited, was extremely powerful in terms of agro-food production, so powerful that few regions in the surroundings might have paralleled the production of Swāt throughout at least three millennia. Recent studies carried out at the Max Planck Institute in Jena, as a spin-off of the Harvard-led project on genomics, are proving it with new data. Botanical samples, mostly wheat and rice (>30,000 seeds so far) were collected during the 2016-2024 excavations of the Italian Mission at Barikot (BCE 1200-350 CE). A study of a first set of 5,000 seeds has been recently published (Spengler et al. 2021). The preliminary results of a cognate research on the stable isotopes of a set of individuals from Swāt (from BCE 1200 to 1200 CE) can help understand the reason of such genetic continuity. In fact, it seems that the inhabitants of Swāt have experienced a substantial dietary continuity mostly based on C3 plants (wheat and rice). That happened throughout three millennia, despite the various climatic variations that should have, in normal conditions, affected the production and therefore the dietary.

4 D. Reich and V. Narasimhan (pers. comm.). *AASI* = Ancient Ancestral South Indians. The major genetic pools in the Swāt population are Iranian agriculturalist-related (*Indus_Periphery_West*), steppe pastoralist-related, and *AASI*-related (Narasimhan *et al.* 2019).

The earliest phases of prehistory of Swāt were recorded in the Ghalegai rock shelter and some farm-site settlements excavated at Loebanr III, Aligrama, Kalako-dherai, and Barikot (Stacul 1987). Some of these sites were already established during the so-called Northern Neolithic, when improved climatic conditions favored the spread of agriculture in Kashmir and in Swāt in Period III (3rd-2nd millennia BCE). The subsequent Period IV (1700-1400 BCE), featured new material and settlement patterns (the so-called dwelling pits) comparable again with the evidence of Kashmir and Inner Asia (including jade beads and rare carved bone pins). The most important element linking Swāt and Kashmir with inner Asia is the notched sickle or 'perforated knife', a very efficient stone-tool provided with holes to loop it to the wrist, which, was largely diffused in many regions where rice was early cultivated. The status value of that tool is proved by many examples made of jade found in China. All the Period IV sites of Swāt yielded evidence of wheat, barley, lentils, etc., but especially rice. This was the earliest proof that double-cropping agriculture – the basis of ordinary agro-production in Swāt – was adopted at least since the second millennium BCE. The pre-requisite of this system is the contemporaneous presence of both winter and summer cereal crops, i.e. wheat/barley and rice. In terms of local agriculture, what really made the difference was the import of a highly-productive and nutrient non-native summer cereal: rice. This is really the key of double-cropping agriculture in Swāt, whereas millet, a climate-smart but less yield productive summer cereal, apparently was never cultivated. In terms of production, thanks to the introduction of rice, ancient farmers were able to get two staple crops from the same land in the same year, in late spring and in fall. In natural conditions, double cropping is possible thanks to the combination of mild fresh climate and abundance of water throughout the year. Such factors in the region are only available at medium altitudes, in zones fairly protected by natural barriers from the monsoons. Mountain valleys have though generally scarce exploitable land, or with reduced insolation. High insolation in the Hindukush-Karakorum-Himalaya is available only in valleys whose axis is oriented East-West, which are orographically rare. Very few fortunate zones enjoy a good insolation, mild climate, regular water supply, and relative availability of land. They are natural glass-houses, or temperate islands. Obviously, these zones, although logistically marginal, have been always strategically crucial for organized states interested in both protecting the surplus capacity, and steering the agro-production according to their necessities. This is why these zones were possibly amongst the first and the few ones where, in ancient South Asia, monocultures were practised. Only two of these zones have been deeply studied on that regard:

Kashmir and Swāt. The critical mass of archaeological data yielded by the latter is enough detailed to allow the elaboration of a hypothetical model on the strategic role of these agro-production zones in antiquity.

In Giovanni Verardi's book *Hardships and Downfall of Buddhism in India* there is an interesting link to the tale of Puṣyamitra as told in the *Divyāvadāna* and other sources (Verardi 2011: 101, fn. 257). The story of Puṣyamitra's defeat took place in a city of North-West India, which was tentatively identified with Barikot in Swāt. That city is otherwise known in the Indian sources and their Chinese versions as Koṣṭhaka/Sthūlakoṣṭha (translated in Chinese as "the Granary"; see on that Coloru 2023). Whether or not Koṣṭhaka/Sthūlakoṣṭha was an epithet of Barikot, I found it convincing that the place is in Swāt. Here the main element, as we will see, is exactly that the toponym, and its significant meaning, can be soundly associated to Swāt: Koṣṭhaka is mentioned also in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* as the place where occurred the conversion of the mother of Uttarasena, king of Uḍḍiyāna, i.e. Swāt.

The name of the ancient city, Vajirasthāna (see above 1.3), can be interpreted as 'the *sthāna* ([fortified] place) of Vajra/Vajira'. The first to associate the latter with Bázira/Beira, the city besieged and conquered by Alexander in the autumn of 327 BCE (Arr. *Anab.* IV, 27, 5-9; Cur. *Hist*. VIII, 10, 22) was Sir Aurel Stein (1930). Later on it was Giuseppe Tucci who convincingly associated the early toponym 'Vajirasthāna' with the Greek form Bázira. The missing element for the association between Barikot and Bázira/Beira was provided by Stefan Baums: "Given that the best approximation for the pronunciation of va(y)ira is [ve(j)irə], the information provided by Curtius Rufus on the pronunciation of the local name [Beira] seems extremely precise, thus revealing that the source that he used was particularly reliable on this point" (Baums 2019: 169-170).

After the last years of excavation and research, Barikot can be now regarded as the key-site not only for the Swāt sequence[5], but more in general for the whole Gandhara.

The role of Barikot is now clear thanks to archaeology. A further proof of the association between Barikot and Bazira/Beira, is Tucci's identification of Mount Aornos, mentioned by Alexander, with Mt Ilam which dominates the ancient settlement of Barikot.[6]

5 The new radiocarbon dates (24 new AMS-C14 dates) are published in Olivieri et al. 2019.

6 For a recapitulation of the problem and its solution, see Coloru and Olivieri 2021.

Bazira/Beira was probably founded as the centre of an agrarian colony, as early as the 6th century BCE. That was the period of the development of the early-historic polities of North-West India within the expanding dynamic trading/excise policy of the Achaemenians, when Taxila and the part of Gandhara East of the Indus River became integral part of the Indian heartland. The foundation of the early city at Barikot, with its specialized industries (agriculture and glass-production are well documented), saw also the presence of both Iranic and Indo-Gangetic ceramic forms, locally produced at the site. But why build a city or an agrarian colony in Swāt? Wouldn't it have been better to invest the same resources on the low plains along the major rivers and major trade routes? A possible answer can be found in the climate.

Archaebotanical evidence shows that at the regional capital, Charsadda-Pushkalavati, cereal waste products were missing; this can be interpreted as the cereals were not cultivated locally but imported from more humid environments, like Swāt that, according to findings, was extremely rich at this time. According to our recent palaeoclimatic studies, a long phase of climatic optimum ('Gandharan optimum') began in the second half of the 1st millennium BCE. This phase lasted for almost a millennium, until around 500 BCE. The 'Gandharan optimum' can thus be associated with the peak of double-crop agriculture, the related urban phase, the spread of Buddhism and Buddhist monasticism, etc.

My interpretation is that regional capitals Pushkalavati and Taxila, established along the major trade route to India linking Kabul to Pataliputra, were possibly depending on the double-cropping climate of the highlands for their regular supply of staple agricultural products. This is a good reason not only to found a colonial town in Swāt, but also to maintain it.

The significance of agrarian colonies, such as Barikot, was certainly related to the strength of their empires or regional powers, but did not totally depend on them; rather, it was mostly linked to their climatic exceptionality. For example, at Barikot, Iranic pottery forms disappeared quite abruptly between 350 and 250 BCE in parallel with the collapse of the Achamenian system. However, after a temporary phase of contraction, nothing changed since crops were copious as usual since, at the time of Alexander (327 BCE), a first-hand source such as Curtius Rufus describes the city as *opulenta* (*Hist.* VIII 19, 22), a term, parsimoniously utilized in his *Historiae,* that indicates agricultural wealth. Another example is provided by Ptolemy I Soter whose memoirs as a general under Alexander during the Swāt campaign are recorded in Arrian (*Anab.* IV 25, 4); he

mentions “large herds of superior quality” seized there by Alexander and sent to Macedonia.

Despite the political changes, Swāt (at that time ruled by local rulers[7]) remained an important source of food production. That did not escape the careful planning of Alexander so as to guarantee at the same time supplies and safe control of the road to India.[8] The detour of Alexander in Swāt and his march to the Indus, took place – as Babur would know to his own cost a thousand year later – in the best time of the year, when the water level of the rivers was favourable, and after the harvesting and storing of seasonal crops: “It was the end of the year, only a day or two left in Pisces [...] if we went now to Swāt the soldiers would not find any grain and would suffer. [...] Next year we should come earlier, at harvest time [...].” (*Bāburnāma* fol. 220–221 [Thackston 2002: 268]).

In Swāt, as we know from Arrian, Alexander “built fortresses at Ora and Massaga for the defence of the region, and fortified the city of Bazira”.[9] Two centuries later the Indo-Greeks built a new massive stone-masonry defence around the city.

2.2.2 Before the Kushans

The Indo-Greeks

> *“This is the last event of [the stupa of Butkara I] whose beginnings are fairly certain; some coins found in the third stupa indicate that it already existed at the times of Menander (140 BCE or soon after), a Greek king who took pleasure in philosophical arguments at the manner of sophists with the monk Nagasena; during his time, another stupa was built near Bajaur and restored by a Greek governor”.*

See above p. 165

“For many years, trying to figure out how to quantify the impact of the political presence of the Indo-Greeks in Gandhāra and North-West India, we imagined a situation comparable to the early years of the East

7 See e.g. Curt., VIII 10, 1. Among these groups, those who controlled Swāt are known in Alexander’s sources as Assakenians.

8 The detour of Alexander in Swāt is otherwise inexplicable. Geographically, Swāt is a cul-de-sac, not a major transit road. The capital of the Assakenians, Massaga, has been definitely identified with the modern Mingora by Elisa Iori (Iori 2023b). Omar Coloru pointed out to me a passage from Strabo that confirms the agricultural wealth of this region (Strabo, XV 1, 26).

9 Arr. *Anab.* IV 28, 4. Ora is identified with Udegram.

Indian Company, with scattered, quantitatively negligible self-defended installations all-but-lost in the vastness of the Indian subcontinent" (Olivieri 2021: 386). What changed our perspective was, as we will see, the recent fieldwork at Barikot.

"Nowadays, I am inclined to think that the impact of Indo-Greek rule along the major economic corridors of ancient India (along the axis of its major rivers, the Kabul, Indus and the rivers of Punjab) was a major one, and an intentional one, with a crucial local component. Ruling from India and detached from the Central Asian motherland, the Indo-Greeks apparently pursued a systematic political plan. It involved major urban foundations, patronage of religious communities, organization of power and resources, monetary reform, intense diplomatic activity, and warfare. The chronological evidence revealed in Swāt connects these activities to the first successors of Menander, who perhaps began to realize fully a project originally planned by their celebrated predecessor (see below Chronological List). The impact of this activity was not only important for their subjects and for Indic culture, but also moulded and oriented the future expression of power by the dynasty of Azes, the second wave of Sakas, who basically imitated the same politics as the Indo-Greeks, acting—like their forerunners—as reformers, patrons and founders of cities." (ibid.).

Unfortunately, the list of archaeological projects dedicated to early-historic settlement and urban excavations in the region comprises a few sites only: Taxila/Sirkap; Taxila/Bhir Mound; Charsadda/Bala Hisar; Charsadda/Shaikhan-dheri; Udegram; Barama; Barikot. The first two sites are in the Taxila valley (in the trans-Indus territories); the two sites at Charsadda are near the junction of the Swāt and Kabul rivers in Gandhara proper; and the three remaining sites are in Swāt, in Northern Gandhara.

After the small-scale excavation carried out at Barama (Faccenna 1964-65) and the old-fashioned exacavations at Udegram (Gullini 1962), only the relatively recent dig at Barikot can be considered a major extended project (1984 - still ongoing), while all the others were either short-term projects (like those at Charsadda and the one at Taxila-Sirkap), or interrupted and never resumed. Barikot is also the only one where modern stratigraphic excavation systems have been tested and applied on a large scale.

Barikot and the evidence from Swāt

(see Figs 2.12, 2.26, 2.33, 2.34)

> *"Our investigation started at the southern border of Swāt and more specifically where the road stops in front of a massive rock, solid limestone, stuck into the river and forcing it to change its course. This knoll, awkwardly sitting on the bank like a crouching elephant, and the village next to it are now called Barikot. The name corresponds to the ancient one of Vajira that Alexander's writers rendered Bazira".*

See above p. 146

From the 2014-2017 excavation at Barikot, we know that the city, founded during a very well defined Achaemenid acculturation phase (c. 6th-5th century BCE), was fortified at least four times, before the urban circuit fell into disrepair and was abandoned during the so-called *pax kusanica* in mid-2nd century CE (Tucci 1977: 49-50). The first fortification is revealed by a large inner earthen rampart with upper palisade dated to the early Iron Age (1200-800 BCE).

Outside the rampart, the remains of the early Iron Age settlement were sealed by a thick silty clayish deposit, which has been interpreted as the levelling of a large rammed earth structure upon which the Indo-Greek defensive wall was built. This thick deposit, dated 369–201 BCE, covered the upper edges of the defensive ditch, proving that the ditch was already cut, i.e. the area was already fortified, when the area was further disturbed by the construction of the Indo-Greek fortification. Is this a proof of the fortification of Bázira built by the Macedonians?

Another important result concerns the 2022 discovery of a Buddhist apsidal temple dated on a radiocarbon basis to the mid-3rd century BCE at a time historically associated with the maximum expansion of the Mauryan rule (Olivieri et al. 2022). The temple was maintained in its original shape at the time of the Indo-Greeks. Although it later underwent a series of phases of reconstructions and extensions, more or less it retained its character until the end of the 3rd century CE (Fig. 2.12).

The presence of such a monument, with such an early date and such a long history, speaks volumes not only of the importance of Barikot for Buddhism, but also about the (now less) 'silent' presence of the 'Mauryan' phases in Gandhara archaeology.

In one of the structural phases associated with Indo-Greek material (Macrophase 3a3) the massive stone-masonry city wall was built. The lower city and the acropolis were enclosed by a massive defensive wall

with rectangular bastions every 28 meters, the equivalent of 100 Attic feet. To date, the urban wall represents the only excavated Indo-Greek urban defensive structure in South Asia.

The foundation of the wall is associated with a burial pit which was dug in the external trampling surface immediately *ante* the erection of the city wall. The combined archaeological data suggest that with the construction of the urban circuit important structural events took place after 150 BCE, and that either Menander or his successors (Zoilos I, Antialkidas, Lysias; see below Chronological List) may have had a role in it.

The fortification was later rebuilt and ameliorated following a destructive earthquake at the time of the Saka-Parthians, c. BCE 50-50 CE according to the weighted average of the C14 evidence.

The political decision and the associated financial investment related to the Indo-Greek fortification can be only understood in the framework of a major political event, possibly the same as was behind the foundation of the new city of Puṣkalāvatī at Shaikhan-dheri.

A possible proof that a larger programme of power consolidation had been launched is the coeval reconstruction of the Dharmarājika stupa at one of the most important Buddhist sanctuaries of Gandhāra, c. 20 kilometers North-East of Barikot, at Butkara I.

Udegram, Barama and Butkara I

> *"It was clear that we had found a specific sign of the beginning of life in Udegram (Ora). The city that Alexander conquered had to be in one of these three places. In order to reach certain conclusions, there was nothing else to do than open trenches in all three places: in the valley, near the ruins of the castle, and then in Gogdara".*

See above p. 149

The earliest occupation phases at Udegram (Gullini 1962; strata VIII and VII) find a parallel in Barikot Mauryan phases. At Udegram, strata VI and V are considered Indo-Greek. From a floor level of stratum V, a hoard of 23 punch-marked coins was found inside a small jug. In the same stratum (which does not mean the same layer) was recovered a sherd with an incomplete inscribed Greek name. We can certainly confirm the existence in the mid-2nd century CE of an urban settlement at the site, whose extent, based on the orography and the presence of a citadel on the Mt Raja Gira, was of about 35 ha., far larger than Barikot. Udegram was

certainly a larger centre, possibly the seat of a major aristocratic family of the valley, the royal house of Oḍi, as the place name Odigram/Udegram (Ora in Arrian) would seem to indicate.

Barama is a large flat artificial mound formed by two terraces separated by a moat or vallum (Faccenna 1964-65). The site yielded a sequence of six major structural periods running – with interruptions – from the late Iron Age to the late Kushan period. Two noncalibrated radiocarbon dates from the site (Period 4: ca. 370 BCE; Period 6: ca. 635 BCE) confirm the early historic occupation of the site. The site is located just opposite the Buddhist site of Butkara I (Faccenna 1980-81).

Barama was actually the 'upper town' of an ancient capital, a larger urban settlement of c. 100 ha. (certainly Massaga, see Iori 2023b). Butkara I was an urban Buddhist sanctuary located just at the south-eastern perifery of the ancient capital (see Faccenna 1980-81).

The major Indo-Greek phases at Barama coincide with Butkara I Great Stupa 2 (mid-2nd century BCE). Great Stupa 2 means the "first reconstruction of the Great Stupa", i.e. the Dharmarājika stupa of Butkara I.

The original construction of the stupa is dated by Faccenna to mid-3rd century BCE, while his first reconstruction (Great Stupa 2) with its paved floor F5, is dated by a coin of Menander intentionally deposited as an act of consecration under the podium built around the drum of the stupa.

Great Stupa 3 (the second reconstruction) is quite coherently dated by a set of coins of Azes II to the Saka times (50 BCE-50 CE), and also by a series of epigraphic syncronisms recently evaluated (see Olivieri 2022a: 40-42).

The local kings of Swāt

> *"There were mounds of dirt pointing to buried ruins everywhere. The city existed, it was there underneath, it was hiding; ruins seem to have the modesty of death. The river betrayed its secret: the unpredictable and rough course of the Jambil River took the city from its underground life by unearthing and scattering the ruins of its walls for almost a kilometer along its banks. We could not doubt any longer: he capital was right there [...].*"

See above p. 162

Archeological data of Indo-Greek times Barikot (and Udegram) depict a social context where an élite, bearing Greek names, lived in a multi-lingual and probably multi-ethnic community. In total, in the Indo-Greek acculturation phase, Greek and Brāhmī scripts are equally represented at Barikot (with three fragments each) but, interestingly, they are incised on different types of vessel forms. While Greek inscriptions are confined to Hellenistic tableware, Brāhmī appears on rougher sherds from typical Indic vessels. This dichotomy might be the mirror of a social and ethnic stratification.

In any case, the material culture of the Hellenistic matrix was confined to the limits of the élites' needs and habits, including coinage, writing, military architecture, the system of measurements, luxury items, and a few technical implements. Obviously, a major role was played by the local component, the most elusive one. In a splendid article Baums has summarized the question from the perspective of the epigraphical record. Greek, Indic, hybrid names and local names are used by individuals within the same family lineage: "We have to conclude that although the use of Greek names in Gandhāra bespeaks the continuing historical memory and prestige of the Indo-Greek rulers (especially Menander), we can deduce nothing from it about the ethnicity or cultural self-identification of their bearers [...]" (Baums 2018: 41). The epigraphical records under consideration are mainly the dedicatory inscriptions to Buddhist establishments (i.e. stupas, shrines) by the members of the houses of Oḍi (Swāt) and Apraca (Bajaur?). The former date to the first quarter of the 1st century CE, while the latter are slightly earlier. The role of these local princes as 'all-weather' *clientes* of the foreign kings (whether they were Greek, Saka or Kushana) is clearly attested by the inscription of the Oḍi prince Senavarma who, by mentioning his political brotherhood with the scion of Kujula Kadphises, signed the acceptance of a political pact with the new ruling entity. It was during the time of Senavarma that, among other things, most likely the great shrine of Saidu Sharif I was established with all its innovations, both in architecture and figurative syntax (Fig. 2.28). Innovations that indeed shaped the art and architecture of Buddhist Gandhara for the next two centuries (Olivieri 2022a).

Senavarma, the local families, the Oḍi and their allies, were not only probably local, but also deeply rooted in Swāt. I am introducing here the discovery Maurizio Taddei made of an aristocratic early-historic multiple burial site (known as Butkara IV) near the sanctuary of Butkara I. It includes a tripartite vaulted structure with two double-chambered cells flanking a central chamber, and at least two square cenotaphs. The DNA

of nine of the 20 skeletons have been analysed. Seven individuals show family relatedness. In the central chamber, a male individual (167-46 cal BCE 2-σ) has a first-degree relatedness (mother-son) with a female (context date 200-100 BCE), and a second/third-degree relatedness with another male individual (41 BCE - 57 CE cal. 2-σ). The DNA results are now available (Narasinham et al. 2019). In synthesis, these individuals have a mixed Iranian-Ancient Steppe-South Asian ancestry. Statistically, the admixture shows a significant increase in indigenous South Asian ancestry in comparison to Swāt individuals from late Bronze-early Iron Age, to whom the five analysed individuals nevertheless maintain both a strong genetic relatedness, and, more interestingly, a parallel burial tradition.

2.2.3 The Golden Age of the Kushan Empire

Gandharan art as an archaeological problem

(see Figs 2.14-2.25, 2.29, 2.30, 2.32)

> *"The sculptures that were surfacing were evidence of the ancient links that connected for long and winding roads this part of Asia to the Mediterranean world highlighting the cultural solidarity that brought together the peoples of the Eurasian continent. The art called Gandharan or Indo-Greek [Graeco-Buddhist] or Indo-Roman did not spring up spontaneously: it was the result of a meeting between the artistic ideals of the Hellenic world surviving in the eastern regions of the Roman Empire, and Buddhist spirituality".*

See above p. 165

Gandharan art it is a dilemma per se. If in the British India's narrative Gandharan art was perceived as a direct legacy of Alexander in India, after WWII the debate was whether it should be seen as an extreme form of Roman Provincial art, one of the so-called "non-Mediterranean descendants of the Greek art", a form of a presumed Parthian art nouveau, or the expression of the – again supposed – Kushan dynastic art.[10]

The direct role of the great, earlier and well-established Indian sculptural tradition, for example, was acknowledged only much later by scholars. In the

10 The most important research work so far produced on the issue is A. Filigenzi 2012. Moreover, here the reader is referred to the publications of Maurizio Taddei (= Verardi and Filigenzi eds. 2003), to the work of D. Faccenna (mentioned in the bibliography, although there will be much more to read). Regarding the study of Buddhist monasteries in Gandhara, the only scientific work ever carried out and published is the one by P. Callieri on the monastery of Saidu Sharif (Callieri 1989).

last years, though, the role of the Western influx, both in terms of sculptural techniques and iconography, has been re-evaluated. In the future, the study of the exceptional material from the site of Saidu Sharif I excavated by Domenico Faccenna will have a greater role. Here, for the first time in Gandharan archaeology, a great part of narrative cycle purposely sculpted for the Main Stupa was recovered (see Faccenna, Callieri, Filigenzi 2003, and Olivieri 2022a). The chronology of the masterwork of what has been called the *Maestro* of Saidu (see Fig. 2.18) is extremely precise: around the first half of the 1st century CE, still during the Oḍi dynasty, in the Saka-Parthian period. It is probably the first time that the episodes of the life of Buddha are expressed, like a Buddhist form of the Telephos's cycle, following a biographical cycle. At Pergamon the story is told in continuous form, although separated by parts of the paysage; here at Saidu, it is partitioned by Corinthian columns. At Saidu Sahrif, a mechanical innovation, the use of drill, was introduced by the *Maestro* of Saidu. This innovation, which is later found in other ateliers of Swāt, can be read as a technical citation enhancing the authenticity of the Western repertoires represented by Gandharan artists. The specialized carvers who worked for example for the Buddhist centers around Barikot on genre scenes of Classical inspiration were probably aware of this particular Western carving technique; they may have intentionally employed the drill in the final stages of their work to reinforce the non-Indic look and the feel of the subject represented. But aside from these problematics there is another one, which is really striking: chronology. The issue was for a long time affected by the chronology of Kanishka I, the great Kushan emperor mentioned in the famous reliquary from Shah-ji Dheri, near Peshawar, where the so-called Kanishka stupa spoken by Xuangzang was located. In the past the chronology of Kanishka oscillated between 78 (followed by Gérard Fussman and others) and 232 CE – (according to the numismatic chronology established by the Austrian numismatist Robert Göbl). The date, which is now generally accepted, 127 CE, has been recently confirmed through a sound and effective analysis by the German Indologist Harry Falk, followed also the British numismatist Joe Cribb (see Falk, ed. 2015). The most striking point of the debate was that amongst all the elements analyzed, the archaeological datum was always absent. Of course, the reason is that the contribution of stratigraphic archaeology was extremely scarce also in Buddhist sites. The evidence provided by an urban excavation, as proved by the dig at Barikot, is far more tridimensional, and chronology-wise more reliable.

The archaeological practice

> *"To a scientist involved in this kind of research, the most important virtue is certainly patience; this in turn is constantly challenged by curiosity which is always awake and unsatisfied. Curiosity burns with the desire to move right away, without any delay, from what is known to what is not; it would like to read in an instant the excavations as if they were mixed pages of a book about the past. Patience instead contains curiosity, disciplines it, and forces it to move step by step to avoid fascinating but useless leaps. Sharp and careful observation gets used to point out one by one the signs of the past, to identify the different times by examining broken pottery, to perceive in the wounds of the soil cut out by digging the overlapping, the changes, the pauses and the new beginnings, to reconnect the broken links of a chain connecting the present to the beginnings".*

See above p. 163

A radical change in the archaeological practice in Gandhara was the introduction of stratigraphic methodology since the early excavations of Buddhist sites in Swāt. In the subcontinent a reliable excavation method was introduced by M. Wheeler after 1942, but never utilized for the excavation of a Buddhist site in Gandhara. The larger excavations in the Taxila and Peshawar valleys carried out during the tenure of J. Marshall as Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India were basically carried out with a methodology that Wheeler described as pseudo-scientific. Therefore, the excavations opened by Faccenna in Swāt were the first carried out following a modern scientific method, and the collection of sculptures recovered from those sites, now in the Swāt Museum and partly in Rome, contained the first Gandharan sculptures, and were possibly amongst the very few ones that included a reliable archaeological record and metadata.

While the combined artistic and archaeological evidence from the Buddhist sanctuary of Saidu Sharif I (and Butkara I) allowed Faccenna to collocate the earliest attestation of Gandharan figurative art in the first quarter of the 1st century CE, at Butkara I, a shift towards plastic materials and related techniques can be observed on a large scale during the Period of Great Stupa 4 (the third reconstruction of the Great Stupa), which covers a long time span (from the end of the 2nd/early 3rd century to the 7th century CE), and encompasses crucial moments of change, enrichment and embellishment. This period has been studied with great detail by A. Filigenzi (see Olivieri and Filigenzi 2018, and Olivieri 2022a

with references). It seems that at the time of Great Stupa 4 at Butkara I – the most important and richest artistic centre of the region – it was not possible to obtain newly-made stone sculptures. Side by side with the increasing use of calcareous stone as building material, stucco sculptures and decorations began to predominate, while stone sculptures became an ever-rarer commodity. Stone from collapsed monuments was collected and re-used, often as filling material, sometimes re-cut and reworked; less frequently, it was re-employed in the decoration of the monument, with the missing parts reintegrated by means of stucco additions.

The surface of the stupa, the enclosure wall and, over time, also floors, were coated with plaster, which has been found to exist in numerous layers. Although only scant traces of paint survive, we may safely assume that the extensive use of both plaster coats and stucco sculptural decorations was inseparable from a lively polychromy. As for the figurative apparatus, Great Stupa 4 yielded extremely fragmentary evidence of stucco sculpture, which nonetheless bespeak the richness and variety of artistic forms. With very few exceptions, such as the rare sculptural remains *in situ*, the surviving fragments cannot be precisely correlated to the various phases. One extremely important integration to this cultural-chronological sequence is now offered by the small Buddhist architectures of Barikot.

The urban geography of the great Kushans

> *"This change of empires – the biggest and long lasting one was the Kushana which lasted until the 4th century, though we know little about its last times – took place during four or five centuries. Yet, just before the definitive collapse, they began to give way to the first pressure of the Sasanians, broke up and regrouped, and finally disappear".*

See above p. 181

Scholars face some issues when approaching the themes addressed in this section. The first issue regards the label 'Kushan' attributed to the material culture assemblages from a defined timeline. The very idea of naming stratigraphic phases or contexts as 'Kushan', is in fashion since Marshall's fieldwork in British India, and the Soviet expeditions in Central Asia. The second issue concerns the geographical space of the Kushans.

The *summa* of the space that is diachronically associated to them, goes from Gansu to Bactria, and from there to the Ganges. When considering the time-frame between Kujula Kadphises and Vasudeva, the north-western

limits of that space can be fixed in Bactria, and the southern limits, along Rajasthan and the Vindhya range, along the major trade route connecting Bactria to the Ganges. Along the trade route was a constellation of earlier urban establishments. North-West India and the Gangetic valley can be considered the 'land of the cities'.

There were almost two dozen of major cities, some of them amongst the biggest ones in Eurasia: for example Bactra, Kausambi, and Pataliputra (that was bigger than Rome and Athens). These cities were also far earlier than the Kushans and well established before becoming part of their dominions.

The third issue regards the impact of Kushans on that space. With few exceptions, the urban and cultic establishments associated to the Kushans predate them, and saw their most remarkable building phases during the Saka period. In Northern Bactria the major excavated Buddhist sanctuaries were founded in the early Kushan period, but also there, major developments occurred around the 3rd century CE.

In Swāt, foundation or re-foundation of major urban sanctuaries occurred either in the Saka period, or after the end of the Kushans. Contrarily to their predecessors, the Kushans were not founders of cities. Usually, the 'Kushan' urban phases throughout the considered territory saw a progressive enlargement of the existing cities, while significant changes in the lay-out started occurring only towards the end of these phases.

The material culture

> *"Still, the story of the events and the witness of the changing social and historical conditions or the incoming influx of new peoples are not only entrusted to the difficult language of walls or the structure of buildings. The extremely rich findings of vases and the great quantity of silver, copper, and even gold coins date in time the different periods of the city".*

See above, p. 172

The edge of these problems should theoretically be smoothed by the analysis of the material culture. Pottery, for example, is a potentially valuable marker, but, when correctly considered (and this happens very rarely), it reveals to be extremely limited for this purpose. Pottery forms of 'Kushan niveau' in Gandhara reflect a deep process of 'Indianization', which is not documented in coeval sites on both sides of the Hindukush (Callieri and Olivieri 2020). With other typical chronological markers, the assemblages become very local with terracotta figurines, less local with beads and ornaments (which refer to a more regional taste with imported

products, see Micheli 2020), tools and weapons (reflecting the regional state of the technological advancement).

The prevalence of the 'local' or 'regional' aspect over the 'global' is a shared archaeological experience in this archaeological framework. Therefore, if the label 'Kushan' is correct, we ought to write as many different stories of the 'Kushan' cultural materials, as much is the ampleness of their political presence. Paradoxically, we would be though able to dedicate just few lines to each one, since our understanding of the processes of production and distribution of material culture is still at its beginning. In any case, the prevalence of regional/local cultural assemblages within the settlements and urban spaces of this chronological and geographical space contains a very important piece of information in itself. The progressive 'Indianization' of the pottery forms and techniques, although limited to Kushan Gandhara and Swāt, is particularly revealing. The role that Buddhist communities had in the creation of a shared environment of new needs and habits, and new standardized pottery forms, should not be underestimated. Their presence as part of a stable trans-regional system of power in the Kushan period, facilitated the introduction of new forms from the Gangetic India crossing the Indus and developing as local production in Gandhara and Swāt.

We are still in search of a proper 'Kushan' architecture in these regions. Public buildings in Kushan phases differ substantially, even when simply comparing the 'sanctuaries' directly attributed to the Kushans. Also city planning differs radically from region to region. Even the apparently coherent Buddhist architecture of Kushan phase, often reflects regional tendencies. In the end – archaeologists should admit that – the common marker of any given 'Kushan niveau' is basically the coin assemblage. The corollary of this is the immense increase to trade and contacts that became possible once distant territories were unified by the same coinage. Perhaps the royal imagery of Mathura and Surkh Kotal represented the projection 'on the round' of the financial face value traded throughout the Kushan protected territory.

A system of trades

> *"This country, surrounded on all sides by mountains that claim some of the highest peaks in the world, is right in the middle of two roads which are long and difficult to travel on, but cannot prevent human daring; these two roads, to the East and to the West, were constant means of*

exchange of ideas, customs, artistic taste, and trade between Central Asia and the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent".

See above p. 179

It may be an over-simplification, but it looks like as if the Kushan power was mainly a guarantor of trade and exchanges. The protected territory was rich in precious raw material and traded economic resources. The Kushans, descending from horse breeders and traders, might have had developed the unique ability of interacting with large spaces without the support of permanent installations. Their dynamicity was possibly their major ability: they were good in establishing or imposing alliances, and good enough to maintain them alive until it was necessary. Their territorial system of control looks 'loose' enough to keep it sustainable. The Kushans never migrated in mass, and might have remained, like the Ghaznavids, or the Moghuls, a demographically insignificant pool in the controlled territories. By consequence, their system of power would have naturally favored the existing non-state actors and urban settlements. The prevalence of the regional/local over the global, at material culture level, is certainly a proof that there was no central control of production, and the latter was managed through proxy actors: local rulers, guilds, religious communities. In the considered chrono-geographical framework, the cities looked pretty independent, and the presence of the central power is displayed only by the acceptance of a common coinage, which was convertible in the 'transcontinental network'.

We mentioned above the horse trade: that was possibly one of the most valuable goods traded across the Kushan world, as the latter touches all the regions where horses, as signs of prestige, transport, and warfare, were traditionally bred, and traded. Besides horses, trade of precious commodities, both those traditionally regarded as 'Indian' like ivory and spices, as those, like glass and silverware traditionally 'Western', was certainly important but possibly belonged to the 'liquid' part of the trade, as luxury status symbols, like the famous hoard of Begram (if the latter was not a temple deposit; see Morris 2021). Different, and far more important for the role of non-state actors in the cities, like merchants, investors and businessmen's guilds, should have been the export of staple resources: timber and grains from the highlands to the North of the trade route, and minerals from the less favored rocky terrains to the South of the same route.

Examples of the second aspect were the extraction of zinc, copper and salt in Rajasthan, the incredibly rich salt extraction from the Salt Range

(Plin. *HN* XXXIII 29, 3) between Taxila and Sagala (Sialkot), the silver mines of Panjshir, the iron mines at Hajigak (Bamiyan), and the exploitation of the huge copper/iron deposit at Mes Aynak (Logar). A possible hint to explain the early Kushan expansion towards South of Ghazni, could be the nearby huge primary gold/polymetallic deposits in the high mountain terrains (see the early Kushan inscriptions at Dasht-i Nawur at 3000 mt asl).

Small rich centres, between the production area and the major trade cites, were ruled by small principalities who gained their wealth and political ownership from being the intermediate actors of the trade.

We may conclude that the Kushan geography was the geography of a shared or protected territory unified by the coinage. In fact, when the Sasanian started interfering with Bactria, Kapisa-Kabul and Gandhara (the three key-regions of the Kushan world), military operations were carried out in tandem with commercial warfare strategies: the emission on large scale of debased imitation of Vasudeva issues might have resulted in a colossal inflation. The inflation not only paved the road to the introduction of a new copper standard equal to 1/4 to the Kushan standard issue, but should have had a huge impact on the economy across the Kushan world. Or, at least, this is how it looks when we consider the urban crisis that signed the end of the 3rd century CE.

With exceptions, the Kushan urban sites were not newly founded by them, located along major trade routes, and close to major rivers. Small towns in eccentric locations were possibly colonies linked to agricultural production, forestry and mineral resources. The majority of the cities were defended by earlier fortifications, but only few of them have a proper military character.

The chronological framework here considered ranges from the reign of Kujula Kadphises (ca mid-1st century CE), to the years immediately after Vasudeva (mid/end-3rd century CE).

Kushana towns of Swāt

> *The land is covered with broken pottery which the rain, washing it, makes it shine in a reddish sparkle typical of Kushana vases. In fact, after the first attempts, we found the walls of a wide neighbourhood that five different digging expeditions [...] have in part brought to light. The area is divided into well-defined islands of dwellings, built according to a detailed city plan, crossed by paved streets, with drainage channels and*

rows of shops on both sides; there are also residential homes with a front covered yard with pillars and wooden columns the bases of which have been found".

See above p. 171

In the first half of the 1st century CE the Kushan territory to the south of the Hindukush, was more likely limited to Kapisa and Gandhara. Very little is known of the ancient Peshawar (Purushapura/Kanishkapura), where was already established an important trade and religious urban centre.

We have discussed above the foundation of the second Pushkalavati (Shaikhan-dheri) in connection with Bázira (Barikot). The visible parts of both cities reveal the layout as it appeared at the end of the Kushan period. Both cities featured a central cultic monument. A large radial stupa is visible in the aerial view of Shaikhan-dheri, while at Barikot a Buddhist apsidal monument was exposed by recent diggings at the centre of the site. The urban layout looks more regular at Shaikhan-dheri than at Barikot, where the excavated quarters are somehow forced between the diverging stretches of the defensive wall at the south-western corner of the city. The layout reproduces the domestic plan: a central courtyard surrounded by rooms; these domestic units (ca 800 sqm with ca 50-60 inhabitants) are separated by lanes and back-streets. This is the same pattern documented in other Gandharan and Indian cities, from Sirkap II to Bhita, a pattern which in the end derives from the rural architecture.

Unfortunately, the defensive wall was not excavated at Shaikhan-dheri, while at Barikot it was extensively explored and studied in all its phases. The two cities were both deserted by the end of the 3rd century CE.

In Swāt, under the Kushans, small towns like Barikot/Bázira, Udegram/Ora, and the regional capital once known as Massaga, and in the 3rd century as Menjeli (today Mingora) knew a phase of building boom. The south-western quarter of Barikot/Bázira was divided into several dwelling units of different sizes (ranging from 300 to 700 square metres), all arranged around a central courtyard, and in some cases provided with domestic worship areas. The blocks were served by a network of communicating streets, while the main street ran *intra muros* along the western section of the defensive wall. Two of these blocks or units are entirely dedicated to worship purposes.

The north-western quarters of the city, in the 3rd century CE, are characterized by a large cultic complex organized into two main buildings. One of them (Temple B.1) is a large rectangular shrine which opens on to a walled courtyard with niches and an altar. One of the niches yielded a set

of small Buddhist stelae, three of which fixed to the walls by means of iron staples. A few metres to the North excavation revealed a second building (Temple B.2) which was connected to the previous one through a raised corridor. Temple B.2 features a raised rectangular paved space closed on three sides and open to the East. The building had a tetrastyle façade. A small stele representing Hariti was found in the debris of the courtyard (Fig. 2.32). Of special interest is the central courtyard of Dwelling Unit D. Also used as a cooking area, it nevertheless housed a small Buddhist shrine in the collapse debris of which an assortment of reused sculptural materials was found. In the corridor leading from the main street to the courtyard, inside a small stone cyst beside a fireplace, a small stele was found. It depicts an unknown bearded male deity seated in European fashion and holding a chalice and a goat's head (Fig. 2.29). This discovery has however much wider implications, insofar as it provides a common frame of reference for a group of coeval small Gandharan stelae from Barikot. In fact, several more stelae were recovered in situ in various dwelling units or in collapse layers, all belonging to the same chronological phase, including representations of Maitreya, Buddha, and also a stele representing a female deity with a cornucopia. Other stelae, mostly representing female deities, were found in collapse layers in other loci of the same chronological context.

In the same quarters of the ancient city, was discovered a 3rd century CE sacred building (Temple K). It consists of a rectangular enclosure with a central courtyard and with a distyle building open to the North. In front of the latter, in the courtyard, stands a small shrine. As attested by several fragments found at the spot, the shrine was originally provided with stucco decorations and wooden hinged doors. Almost completely reconstructed after a collapse, in its first phase it housed a miniature stupa, the remains of which were partly recovered during the excavation. The distyle building (Temple K) has an open antecella, a cella, and a side corridor leading to a rear chamber (that can be accessed also via the cella), in which a deposit of valuable objects, no doubt donations, was discovered.

The general impression we receive when analyzing the evidence from the Barikot urban sanctuaries, is that the great wave of the sculptural production is past, and all the elements were already reused. The only new production is related to small and medium-size portable stelae. Chronology for this phase is clearly defined on C14 and numismatic basis to early-4th century CE. These evidences are confirmed by the numismatic assemblage, which is clearly defined by three copper types: the Vasudeva-type issues, the Kushano-Sasanian coins and the formerly-called "sub-Kushan" coins. The latter, labelled today by E. Shavarebi as "Gandhāra-Uḍḍiyāna coins"

were much smaller (about 1 g) than the Late Kushan (Vasudeva) and the Kushano-Sasanian issues. Two major earthquakes within the space of less than 50-70 years have been clearly documented in these last phases of the city.

This fact, alongside the political earthquake represented by the contemporary collapse of the Kushan Empire, eventually led to the abandonment of the city (early-4th century CE), whereas, in the country areas the Buddhist communities managed to cope with the general crisis.

Before the 3rd century crisis sculptors' ateliers were extremely active in the Barikot area and in Swāt. In the Barikot area, around the 2nd century CE a workshop or a group of sculptors who specialized exclusively in carving classically inspired genre scenes, has been identified by Brancaccio (Brancaccio and Olivieri 2019). The sculptors worked at various Buddhist sites in the Barikot area on commissions of minor monuments such as votive stupas paid by the local aristocracy. Brancaccio and I proposed recently a hypothesis aiming at revising the current interpretive model for the production of Gandharan art maintaining that the whole sculptural production at any given Buddhist center was the creation of site-specific workshops. Instead, the evidence from Gumbat – an important site recently excavated by the Italian Mission 5 km South-West of Barikot (Figs 1.22 and 2.6) - and other sites strongly suggest the existence of specialized regional groups of artists conversed in particular themes working simultaneously at different sites on individual commissions. A cornice from Gumbat depicts two main scenes: a drinking couple and birds sipping from a vessel, separated by acanthus leaves; the fragment from Panr represents the same birds and vessel motif, this time associated with an amorous couple, while vines are carved to separate the vignettes. Birds drinking from a water basin are also reproduced in a frieze from Gumbat. The birds-and-basin motif was very popular in the Roman world and is especially well attested in the mosaic tradition. The best-known examples come from the Hadrian's Villa in Tivoli and from several houses in Pompei. Pliny the Elder elucidates us on the Hellenistic origin of such artistic theme: apparently the subject was first represented in the famous "Unswept House" mosaic from Pergamon attributed to the artist Sosus in the 2nd century BCE. Such a celebrated image type from the Hellenistic and Roman world came to be assimilated into the Gandharan tradition and incorporated within the repertoire of classically inspired themes such as wine drinking, grapes and satyres.

2.2.4 After the Kushans (see Figs 2.21, 2.31)

From schist to stucco

> *"The floor was made of coarser rocks with some squared tiles of different colors, green, yellow, blue, and brown taken from a previous collapsed building, giving new brilliance to the monument; now, only the bare frame of this structure is still standing. Its surface was covered by painted stucco; at times it was decorated with flowery motifs, and at other times with worshipping figures and just a few fragments can still be found".*

See above p. 164

The Main Stupa of the Buddhist sacred area of Amluk-dara (five km South-East of Barikot) (Fig. 2.27) is one of the most majestic and best conserved in Gandhara (see refs. in Olivieri and Filigenzi 2018). The monument evidences a complex sequence of renovation and reuse spanning a long period of time, from the 2nd to the 10th century CE. Originally provided with a bluish schist decoration, the main monument was completely reshaped in the mid-3rd century, possibly after damages caused by the same seismic events responsible for the desertion of the nearby Barikot. The staircase with its monumental entrance (two well-sculpted step-side elements), was further lengthened. Pilasters, modillions and most of the false brackets of the podium and upper storeys of the Main Stupa were remade in a special variety of soft limestone, and then copiously stuccoed and painted. Now we understand that stucco was certainly a by-product of soft limestone workmanship.

On the basis of the evidence yielded by both the urban site of Barikot, and the Buddhist complexes of Butkara I and Amluk-dara, and other sites recently excavated in Swāt, like Gumbat, we may draw the following preliminary conclusions.

Notwithstanding schist is widely available and quarried in Swāt, in the 3rd century soft limestone and stucco appear together in Swāt and in coeval Kushano-Sasanian evidence yielded at Termez, and in other sites of Central Asia. The architectural decoration was made in soft limestone, which is not a local stone: it is instead extensively quarried in the rocky reliefs South and South-East of Swāt, in Buner, Mardan, Swabi and Taxila. This may imply that the local schist quarry areas of Swāt were closed or, most probably, that they were working at a very low pace, maybe just for the only surviving contemporary production, i.e. the stelae that we have found in plenty at Barikot.

The evidence from Amluk-dara and Butkara are confirmed by the settlement of Barikot. Despite the fragmentary state of preservation, the remains of stucco sculptures recovered at Barikot are of utmost importance for the chronological patterning of Gandharan art. The clear and datable stratigraphic context in which they were found is a reliable clue to an early introduction of stucco decorations, since at Barikot this predates the earthquakes that determined the crisis of the city towards the end of the 3rd century CE. Thus, we may say that the increasing use of media such as local soapstone, soft limestone and stucco has significant correlations with periods of economic distress, which may have favoured the adoption of cheaper building options based on low-cost materials and processing techniques.

According to Filigenzi (in Olivieri and Filigenzi 2018), the stratigraphic history of events also warns us that other triggering factors of cultural significance may have stimulated the change; first of all, we may assume, a new aesthetics, possibly radiating from Afghanistan, southern Central Asia and Xinjiang, where strong and captivating artistic forms, characterised by smoothness of volumes, pathos, polychromy and gilding were developed precisely because of the large-scale use of malleable materials. The new trends in sculpture and architecture pose challenges to archaeological interpretation, since their real magnitude and impact are extremely difficult to verify. In most cases, changes are only insufficiently documented by partial additions that overlap existing layouts. Moreover – as old installations in stone have often survived where later additions made of more short-lived materials have almost disappeared – our reconstructions of the Gandharan phenomenon risk being flawed by insufficient recognition of relevant evidence. It is clear that even the most careful investigation will not be able to fill all the gaps completely. Hasty excavations, often carried out in the framework of rescue archaeology, further aggravate this problem.

That period initially concides with that of Great Stupa 4 at Butkara I. The data from the last urban phases at Barikot, which rely on the cross-validation of stratigraphy, numismatic evidence and radiocarbon analyses, confirm that important changes start taking place in Swāt in a quite early period. They prove that during the 3rd century CE, side by side with the introduction of stucco, the figurative art in the urban cultic complex is represented only by small stelae, and by re-used Gandharan materials. Moreover, on the whole, the stelae display features that would have probably been assigned to a later date if judged on the grounds of style only (see again Olivieri and Filigenzi 2018).

Before concluding this part, we give news of our discovery in Barikot, 2022, of a large circular stupa enlarged three times to c. 20 metres in diameter. The last enlargement was decorated with niches housing series of seated Buddhas all apparently identical (sixteen niches, each with four Buddhas, are assumed). The interest of this monument lies in the fact that it was built on the ruins of the abandoned city towards the beginning of the 4th century. The stupa, positioned in the centre of a paved terrace, was enclosed by small cult buildings. From the levels of this monument come two interesting silver coins, one Kidarite (Fig. 2.52), the other of the Alchon kings, the first of their kind found in Barikot.[11]

Buddhist economy

> *"Buddha has never been to Swāt, yet just before our times, monks spoke of his sojourns there followed by his faithful disciple Vajrapani to convert a demon that lived near the springs of Swāt. The demon's name was Apalala; every year, waking up from his sleep, he would cause lightnings and storms. [...] After a long and useless struggle, Apalala, exhausted, worn out, humiliated, gave up and sought mercy from Buddha. [...] This is a legend that has its value because it explains in its own way the seasonal floods that still take place in Swāt".*

See above p. 152

There are ample traces of two major earthquakes at Barikot in mid-/end-3rd century CE. Suddenly, the city of Barikot was abandoned. At the same time, Udegram/Ora in Swāt, Pushkalavati/Shaikhan-dheri and probably Taxila/Sirkap in Gandhara were abandoned too. The crisis of urbanism in Gandhara and Swāt certainly implied drastic changes, even if the cities, in particular Barikot, were no more pivoting the economy, rather mirroring the agro-economy wealth. As demonstrated by previous studies, agro-production, at least from the beginning of the 2nd century CE, was firmly in the hands of the monasteries. After all, the Buddhist monasteries were the only agents which had staff, organization, and infrastractures, besides disposing of expert administrators of high ethical reputation with writing and computing skills. The Buddhist monasteries must have had accumulated, through royal and private donations, large estates where they built hydraulic infrastructures, such as dams, aqueducts and pit-wells, still visible today. Land might have been administered by means of a joint

11 In general, "Huna" coins are very rare in Swāt; a few are associated with the Great Stupa 4 of Butkara I.

system: tenancy in the high pastures and forestry pools, and crop-sharing in the lower lands. [12]

The first system is possibly documented by the existence of non-Buddhist semi-nomad tribes in the mountains. These tribes, certainly non-literated, but in possession of an elaborated oral heritage, left an amazing testimony of rock art, incised rocks, painted shelters (see Figs 2.10-11) and hermitages, megaliths, throughout the mountain areas surrounding the main river courses (Olivieri 2015a). Some of the ideograms and symbols can be understood at the light of the Hinduistic background, which may date from the early arrival of the Indo-Iranians in Swāt around 1200 BCE. The second system (crop-sharing) is documented by the existence of structured farm villages and agricultural terraces along the alluvial land, at the foot of the rich Buddhist monasteries (Olivieri, Vidale et al. 2006). Significantly, this system was still well functional two centuries after the abandonment of the city. Let us figure out the tentative dimension of the agrarian production in Swāt. If one considers approximately 1,000 sq km of agro-land suitable for double cropping, in optimal conditions (which we assume were the 'normal conditions' in Swāt), this would produce enough food to feed more than half-million people. In pre-modern times the population never exceeded this figure. At the peak of the urban and monastic development, at the end of the 2nd century CE, there might have been c. 250,000 inhabitants in Swāt, with about 30,000 people living in the cities (on the basis of Schlingloff 2014); only Barikot, with its 12 ha, had 6,000 inhabitants. This figure should not be too far from the truth. According to some intelligence reports updated to 1907, the total population of the valley was estimated at about 96,000. Forty years later, at the climax of the political stability created by the Yusufzai State of Swāt, the census of the valley was c. 300,000. These figures clearly indicate that a great part (>50% in ancient times) of the annual agro-production was suitable for export. Agriculture was an industry in Swāt, and the Buddhist monasteries were in charge of it. There is a moment though when also this system stopped working.

"It is not easy to explain the decrease of monasteries after Fa-hsien [Faxian] (399-414 A.D.) (1400 monasteries) and the fact that at the times of Hsüan-tsang [Xuanzang] (he travels from 629 to 645) many of them were in ruins [...]. Sung Yun [Sung Yun] (he travels from 518 to 523) speaks in high terms of the Buddhist community and does not anticipate the different

12 We do not know whether the pattern of conflict between Buddhist elites and the gentry aristocracy over the possession and management of agrarian resources, which has been advanced for northern India, can be applied to Swāt (Verardi 2011).

statements of Hsüan-tsang. 1400 monasteries imply not only a widespread devotion, but also a great wealth necessary for their maintenance." (Tucci 1977: 67). The decline of the Buddhist monasteries around the 6th century CE introduced a new factor in the economic history of the valley. From the archaeological perspective, there is in Swāt a striking gap in terms of archaeological evidence during the late 6th – early 7th century CE. Moreover, Chinese sources and diplomatic annals are also clearly excluding Swāt from the major trade routes after 538 CE. Xuangzang, the first Chinese visitor who came back to Swāt a century later, found the situation of the economy and of the Buddhist complexes direly compromised. Interestingly, a similar gap between major archaeological phases is recorded in almost all the sites stratigraphically investigated to the West of the Khyber from Ghazni to Kapisa: Tapa Sardar I and II, Begram II and III, Tapa Skandar I and II.

Tucci wrote "[...] something had, then, happened [in Swāt] between the visit [of the two travellers]. I suppose the cause may be attributed to natural calamities and social unrest [...]" (1977: 67-68). Verardi was even more explicit: "Nor we can believe that the change [...] took place without any violence" (2011: 172). It is possible that the collapse of the agro-production in Swāt was indirectly related to the so-called "Late Antique Little Ice Age" (LALIA), a long cooling period that occurred between 536 and 660 CE. Scholarly studies have already attributed to LALIA regional collapses of imperial organizations, dramatic exoduses of populations across Eurasia, even the Justinian's plague (Büntgen et al. 2016). As far as Swāt is concerned, it is probably too early to advance a structured hypothesis in that sense. While waiting for new paleo-climatic data from Swāt, the LAILA working-hypothesis opens potentially new perspectives on the impact of climate changes on the ancient economy of the Himalayan double crop pocket zones (Olivieri 2022c, 2025a). For example, it can possibly explain the rapid growth of mountain economies and principalities, already adapted to low temperatures, like the kingdom of Bamiyan and the Palola Shahi of Bolor-Chilas. However, once Xuangzang visited Swāt, there was a new element in the cultural environment: the *deva* temples. Tucci (1977) speaks of possible "social unrest", Verardi (2011) of "violence": certainly, there was a collapse of the social status quo. That collapse may be related to the fall of prestige of the Buddhist elites following the sudden climatic cooling, and the related collapse of agro-production. In the end the Buddhist elites were presenting themselves as the protectors of the natural order symbolized by the conversion of the *nāga* Apalāla by Buddha, which can be considered the 'covenant' moment of Buddhism in Swāt. The story of Apalāla, ruler of the waters and responsible of famine and distress, is embedded with

deep agriculturalist symbolism. When we see the dams and the aqueducts around the ruins of the Buddhist monasteries in Swāt, we cannot but imagine that the irrigation managed by the monks was nothing more than the conversion of Apalala redux on economic scale. The climate drama, besides its impact on the material life of the population, should have had a metaphysical impact on the perception of the capacity of the Buddhist elites of dealing with the elements' forces (the powerful *naga*s who first opposed Buddhism in the valley). Xuangzang describes a doctrinal shift of the Buddhist monks' attitude towards magic and exorcisms. Is that an indicator of what was said above? Let us focus on just one single episode of the long anti-Buddhist process throughout the Gupta times in Kashmir. According to the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* (I 171) the Brahmans were able to please the *naga*s who were responsible for heavy snowfalls that were causing destructions: "the Brahmans, who offered oblations and sacrifices, escaped destructions, while the Bauddhas perished" (Verardi 2011: 168). In any case, the monks' inner legitimacy must have been shaken, creating *de facto* the conditions for a radical power shift.

The rise of Brahmanism

> *"These [Kushans, Sasanians and Ephtalites] were followed by the Hindu Shahi who ruled first from Kabul and then from Hund on the Indo river which, coming down from a semicircle of mountains, opens suddenly onto an uneven rocky desert: it was a powerful reign that had already gone through the first incursion of the Arabs in Afghanistan and had been weakened by those rivalries that have never allowed India to build a stable empire".*

See above p. 182

It is a fact that at the end of the 7th century there were *deva* temples in Swāt, a fact that at the time of Tucci was not archaeologically confirmed (Tucci 1977: 68). A few decades earlier, Xuangzang spoke of ten of these Brahmanical temples, but this is just a piece of the whole picture. Apparently, Xuangzang was the first who noticed the spread of the non-Buddhist Indian religious groups. In Kapisa he describes at least three different groups: naked ascetics, Pāśupata covered with ashes, and others who wear crowns of bones. He speaks of five *deva* temples in Laghman, numerous temples in Nangarhar, at Ghazni-Gardez, and hundreds of temples in Gandhara (Kuwayama 1976: 406-407).

We know, or it is easy to assume, the location of six of those *deva* temples in Swāt One was documented on the top of the Shahkot pass (Zalamkot), one was reported by Deane at Manyar, one is reported in Dir, at Gumbatuna/Gumbat, Talash; a temple was certainly at Udegram, Raja Gira, before the construction of the Ghaznavid mosque. There was possibly another temple at Manglawar, where an important architectural element was documented in the past (Scerrato, Taddei 1995).[13]

The sixth monument was unexpectedly discovered at Barikot on the top of the acropolis in 1998 (Olivieri 2023a). To our great surprise, when we started the first excavation at the site, we discovered that the low mound on the top hid not a stupa, but a major Brahmanical temple (c. 23 x 14 m), accessible from the East through a stairway. Recently, the excavation of the monument restarted and has provided new crucial information. The first point regards chronology. Radiocarbon measurement confirm a late-7th century CE chronology for the temple (cf. Callieri 2005). This chronology matches the tentative dating of both the temple of Khair Khanah, Kabul and of Tapa Skandar II, with their marble sculptures. For now, radiocarbon dates suggest that the temple built on the top of the acropolis at Barikot might have been slightly later than the *deva* temples seen or reported by Xuangzang. The second point regards the implantation of the temple and its cultic milieu. If this date is correct, what about the chronology of the two Buddhist rock-carvings documented at the foot of the acropolis' hill? Both belong to the well-studied class of late Buddhist rock sculptures, which were first reported by Stein and Tucci, and are now magisterially studied by Filigenzi (2015). There are two basic facts associated to this class of sculptures: first, chronology is well fixed to the 7th-8th century; secondly, such rock sculptures are always located on the way to a major Buddhist sanctuary. Thus, we concluded that in the 7th century there might have been a sanctuary on the top-hill of Barikot (see below). *Nihil novum* in Swāt, where many major Buddhist complexes are built on elevated points, on top of terraced or walled superstructures that allowed a wide view.

Excavation campaigns at the Barikot temple revealed important fragments of the original decoration including a marble Gadādevī from a lost life-size Vaiṣṇavite group (Filigenzi 2005). The elevation (of which only the thick torus plinth is fully preserved) was built in stone masonry with all the moulded parts in a stuccoed soft limestone (*kanjur*). The decoration of the temple was rich: stuccoed metopes with full blossomed

13 This is uncertain. Tucci's interpretation of a political split between Swāt is confirmed by the new data. All the deva temples are South of Mingora, while the majority of Buddhist sculptures are North of it.

flowers, elaborated vegetal capitals, and grotesque animal protome masks representing, significantly, lions and boars (two incarnations of Viṣṇu). Most is lost, but there is enough to understand the magnificence of the original architecture. The central shrine, where the cultic group was, is completely lost. Besides the Gadādevī and the fragment of a leg, in 2019, two other marble fragments were discovered: an almost complete figure with folded arms and a torso of a male deity wearing a *dhotī* knotted on the back. The fragments belong possibly to at least three different groups, referring to the same class of Shahi marble sculptures, but each one carved on different marble types, and with its different stylistic features. The Gadādevī and the fragment of a leg belong to a group representing a standing almost life-size frontal Viṣṇu (the Gadādevī is not worked on the back side) with his two personified attributes. Another group is represented by a less than life-size standing deity wearing a *dhotī*, beautifully sculpted in the round. For this we have a direct comparison in a fragment from Tagab (Kapisa). Its original height – considering the dimension of the fragment (0.28 m) – would have been > 1.20 m., (not including the base).

There were two other sculptures found below the acropolis of Barikot: a marble pedestal with traces of a central deity (standing) and two side attendants; a marble pedestal with an unreadable Śāradā inscription belonging to a lost statue. This material may belong to a second shrine. In fact, in the same area, during past excavations, an *amalaka* stone was found reused as base for a pillar.

To the list of the objects associated to the top of the acropolis can be added also a well-known Śāradā inscription now in the Lahore Museum (LM no. 119) (see Fig. 2.40). It presents an extremely interesting text, which, besides mentioning the names of king Jayapaladeva (end-10th century CE) and the placename of Vajirasthāna (Barikot)[14], originally bore the names, now lost, of three individuals who probably patronized the latest restoration of the Brahmanical temple.

Amongst the stucco and marble fragments recovered in the lime kiln debris, a piece of stucco representing a male head, glabrous, with elongated earlobes, wearing a jewelled three-pointed crown was recovered. In agreement with Filigenzi (2010) this stucco head may represent a local king or a prince. The hypothesis is also reinforced if – as I think – the lobes' holes of our piece were not empty, instead bearing some kind of plain earrings, or better earplugs. [15]

14 Line 2: "*(meśvara) śrī jayapāladevarājye śrī vajira(sthā)ne*" (Hinüber 2020).

15 Earplugs are a male ornament well documented during earlier and coeval phases at Barikot (see

The idea that the temple was constructed upon a monumental terrace initially raised for for Buddhist stupas was already discussed. "In my opinion, the recovery of few but otherwise unjustifiable Gandharan pieces on the top of the Barikot hill [...] shows that a Buddhist sacred area should have been existing there. The sacred area – that should have been still in use in post-Gandharan age, given the rock reliefs decorating the hillsides – according to my reconstruction, disappeared under the massive podium of a Brahmanic temple in the era of the Early Shahi [...] during the 7th century CE" (Olivieri 2010: 358). The main point under debate was if the artificial terrace and the temple were contemporary or not (Olivieri 2003: 46-48; Callieri 2005: 424). Now we know that the temple was built in two phases. A smaller temple built at the end of the 7th century was enlarged towards the end of the 10th century (see the inscription in Fig. 2.40). The firts temple was built after some stupas were razed down, their debris levelled, and a new floor laid.

So, the Vaiṣṇavite temple was built towards the end of the 7th century on a pre-existing artificial terrace dominating the entire Swāt valley, chosen for its intrinsic sacredness since it was in view of the skyline of Mt Ilam (Fig. 2.33b), the ancient Aornos, believed to be the 'Ram Thakth'. The question is whether the stupas were functioning or not, at the time they were demolished. Nonetheless, we should be cautious with the use of the expression "functioning Buddhist site" in this period. Late Buddhist rituals and monasticism of Swāt is still to be understood. The evidence from the coeval phases of the excavated Swāt sites of Butkara I, Shnaisha and Amluk-dara I, is revealing. The three sites feature late Buddhist rock sculptures in or nearby the sacred areas. In the 7th century both sites, although functioning, were in extremely poor conditions, with shabby structures built around the almost buried, crumbled or poorly repaired stupas. The surviving earlier stone and stucco decoration were occasionally re-employed, for cultic purposes, but out of their original context. Overall, the evidence seems pointing at a very unstructured organization, small communities, wandering or isolated siddhas (Verardi 2011: 309). Only at Manglawar (where there was a temple built by Indrabhūti according to the Tibetan pilgrims, Tucci 1940) there is evidence of a structured complex, certainly a major teaching centre, dominated by rock inscriptions and sculptures, including the famous colossal Buddha, the largest of the late Buddhist rock sculptures of Swāt (Olivieri 2017).

Micheli 2007). In Gandharan and later art, earplugs are not present in religious images (Bodhisattvas), but are worn by male donors and lay people (*ibid.*). On kings as donors, one should not forget Khiṅgāla "Śri Ṣāhi / Uḍḍiyāṇa Ṣāhi" who donated the marble statue of Ganeśa from Gardez (dated 765 CE) (see Verardi 2011: 159).

In any case, the overlap between Buddhist and Brahmanical cults, in particular in the Vaiṣṇavite context, in the Barikot and Manyar area, is testified by the discovery of terracotta *tsatsa*s in the Ghaznavid phases (Olivieri and Minardi 2023; Filigenzi 2023), by the hybrid iconography of Manyar rock sculptures (Filigenzi 2015), and finally by the survival of Buddhist dedicatory forums in inscriptions: e.g. in a marble base, now in a private collection, but which was likely illegally excavated on the top of Barikot Hill (Salomon 2018b: fig. 4, fn. 18).

Early Islam[16] (see Fig. 2.42)

> *"Around the year 1000, the powerful and feared founder of the Ghaznavid dynasty, every year he would ride with his cavalry down from the capital Ghazni to crash the last standing Hindu Shahi the Swāt was still a vassal to. The Udegram fort, up high and well supplied, represented a threat on the side and Mahmud vowed to conquer it at all costs ordering one after another of his generals to tear it to the ground".*

See above p. 149

Both at Barikot and at Udegram, these historical phases are followed by clear signs of an early Islamization. On the hillside of the Mt Raja Gira, a very interesting pluri-stratified context was identified. A rather long sequence of building phases was detected, featuring two main pre-Islamic phases - a Buddhist sacred area (Kushan phases) preceding some housing facilities and monumental structures of a probably Shahi date - and an Islamic settlement of primary importance spanning from the 11th to the 13th–14th centuries (Bagnera 2015). The last phase at the site is represented by an Islamic settlement of primary importance, featuring a Ghaznavid-foun ed Mosque, two dwelling areas and a graveyard, which developed around an oratory housing the tomb of a pious Muslim. Spanning from the 11th to at least the end of the 13th century, all this positively proves the existence of a true and long-established Muslim occupation of the area and, at the moment, represents the main archaeological evidence outlining the early Islamization of Swāt. This phase, connected with the Ghaznavid conquest of Northern India and hitherto considered as missing in the literary sources, can now benefit from some precious elements of historical definition offered by the possibility of locating on Mt Raja Gira the toponym Gīrī. The latter is referred to as a 'region' or more frequently 'a fortress' by several Muslim authors writing between the 11th and the 13th centuries (namely the Persians Bayhaqī, Gardīzī, Ibn Bābā al-Qashanī,

16 For part of the information on the Ghaznavid history of Udegram and Swāt, I acknowledge the help of my colleague Alessandra Bagnera.

Jūzjānī, Juwainī, and the Arab Ibn al-Athīr). Particularly, the toponym in question is mentioned with reference to events involving the history first of the Ghaznavids, then of the Khwarizm Shahs and the Mongols.

The main evidence of the Islamic occupation of the area during the Ghaznavid era is the Mosque that was constructed over some pre-existing structures, with a probable Shahi dating, in the middle of the large terrace lying on the hillside of the Mt Raja Gira. The Mosque shows a nearly square plan (28 x 21 m) marked, along the North side, by the presence of a *ziyāda* containing three oblong rooms and overlooking the valley through a facade articulated by three cylindrical tower-buttresses. The prayer hall is of the 'classic' hypostyle type. Paved with highly compacted reddish earth, it was covered by a plain roof, whose supports, most probably made of wood, went lost. They had stone bases of different shapes, many of which have been found *in situ*. The currently visible *miḥrāb* features a pointed surbased head and a square-plan niche, the latter trait confirming the Ghaznavid style of the building. On the right side of the *miḥrāb*, a little quadrangular recess obtained in the northern section of the *qiblī* wall bears witness to the presence of a *minbar*. Also attested by remains that were detected on the earthen floor of the prayer-hall, our Mosque was a *jāmi'*. The Mosque courtyard lies one step lower than the prayer hall and is paved with slabs made of schist. A rectangular basin is located in its centre.

In the building history of the Mosque, two main phases were identified in the sequence of two different *miḥrāb*s. An early reconstruction phase is documented by the exceptional recovery of a Shahi marble metope carved on the back with the dedication written in Arabir of some building works enterprised at the Mosque by Amir Nustagin, a Ghaznavid general (440 HE/1048-1049 CE). The *miḥrāb*s are both square in plan, as was customary in pre-Saljuk Mosques of the Khorasan; they confirm a Ghaznavid chronology for the two associated building phases. The Mosque was surrounded by a settlement area and a small graveyard (50 tombs) dated between 1037 and 1250 (Narasinham et al. 2019).

2.2.5 The Mission founding years (1949-1956)

On the basis of newly studied IsMEO archival data,[17] we know that Giuseppe Tucci's attempt to carry out an archaeological expedition to the

17 Folder "Spedizione Valle dello Swat" 1949-1951 in the Archivio Storico Diplomatico, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Rome). IsMEO is the "Italian Institute for the Middle and Far East", later IsIAO (whose members founded the present ISMEO). The IsMEO President whose

Swat valley started as early as 1949-1950, just two years after the opening of diplomatic relations between Italy and Pakistan. Such an early date, compared to what we previously knew (1954-1955) confirms what Tucci himself had said many times, namely that the idea of an expedition to Swat had occurred to him as early as when he was studying the manuscripts of Tibetan travel reports on Swat (see this Volume). Tucci's plan to enter Swat, planned for the autumn of 1950, did not materlialise, and he had to wait for another five years before realising his long-coveted project (Olivieri 2025c)

In another folder from the IsMEO and Italian Archaeological Mission Archive (whose copy is now in the Mission House at Saidu Sharif), there is a group of letters that date back to 1954 and concern the correspondence between Tucci and Raul Curiel (published in Olivieri 2023b and Olivieri 2025b). Curiel was the first director-general of Pakistan's Department of Archaeology and Museums, established after independence. The first letter sent by Tucci to Curiel is dated 18 August 1954 and follows the brief meeting the two had in Karachi a few weeks earlier. Of that meeting, there is a short report by Tucci dated 27 September 1954 sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Dir. Gen. Political Affairs and Dir. Gen. Foreign Cultural Relations). In the report Tucci recounts the meeting he had in Karachi with the Director General of Archaeology (Curiel), the Deputy Secretary of Education and the Minister of Education, when the future cooperation that should be established between Italy and the Department of Archaeology was discussed. Tucci wrote to Raul Curiel on 29 December 1954: "I would also like to confirm our agreements in principle regarding the archaeological excavations to be undertaken in the Swat Valley, which we discussed and examined in detail." [transl. from French]. This is followed by a second letter from Tucci to Curiel dated 19 January 1955, in which Tucci asks Curiel for some practical information on which seasons are best for excavating in Swat, etc. Curiel's reply, dated 26 January 1955, confirms the Pakistani interest in the Italian proposal, Tucci's reply was sent the same day the letter was received from Karachi, 14 February 1955.

We do not know when exactly the official IsMEO request for the excavation licence in Swat was submitted: certainly between December 1954 and February 1955. On 19 April, IsMEO finally received a letter from H.E. Akhtar Husain the Ambassador of Pakistan to Italy, confirming the Pakistani side's acceptance of the agreement concerning the archaeological excavations. Tucci replied to H.E. on 4 May, giving the bureaucratic process as concluded: "The kind concession of the Pakistani Government

president at the time was Giuseppe Tucci.

is very flattering for the Italian mission". However, in his letter of 19 April, H.E. Akhtar Husain points out an incorrect wording in Article 12 of the 'General Rules' attached to the licence, for which he has since requested clarification from Karachi. Tucci was very concerned about this, because that article provides for the possibility of exporting a portion of the excavated materials, and he informed the Italian Ambassador to Karachi Benedetto d'Acunzo, who reassured him on 25 May: "[Curiel] informed one of my collaborators that the correct text of Art. 12 has been transmitted by him by plane to the Embassy of Pakistan in Rome". The first news that Tucci received from Curiel was on 11 May, when Curiel wrote to Tucci asking for an official letter in English to be sent to him as "Director of Archaeology Pakistan Secretariat Karachi, 1", with a copy to the Embassy in Rome, as acceptance of the 'Special Agreement' to be attached to the 'General Rules', with the exact determination of the sites to be excavated, the period of work, details regarding the publication of the results, etc. From the correspondence between the IsMEO and the Pakistani embassy between 4 June and 5 July 1955, it is clear that Tucci was anxious to obtain the licence with 'official permission' before arriving in Pakistan, while the Pakistani authorities were delaying it in view of the consequences of Art. 12 , which provided for the 'partition' and export of findings between Pakistan and the IsMEO.[18] In fact, the whole dispute lay in the correct wording of Article 12 of the licence issued under the Ancient Monument Preservation Act (AMPA, VIII, 1904; embassy letter to Tucci of 4 June). Thus, in view of the approaching visit of Tucci to Karachi, on 2 September Tucci signed the acceptance of the 'General Rules' of the excavation licence that had been reformulated in the meantime (27 August). On the same day, Tucci sent a copy of the acceptance of the 'Rules' to the Pakistani cultural attaché in Rome, Dr. M.A. Rahman. Tucci, taking for certain the positive progress of the matter, already discussed with Curiel on 7 July the questions concerning the logistics of the first mission the following November (use of tents, means of transport, etc.). The official IsMEO request in English would finally go out on 19 July. Curiel, in a letter on the Department of Archaeology letterhead, acknowledged receipt on 9 August, and acceptance on 16 August 1955 (with subsequent amendments dated 27 August and sent to Tucci on the 2 September 1955). However, again on 16 August 1955 (prot. 19A/2/55-2934) Curiel wrote to Tucci on Department of Archaeology letterhead: "Dear Prof. Tucci, Please refer to my letter No. 19A/2/55-2868, dated 9th August, 1955. We

18 As clearly stated in the excavation licences, Art. 12 stipulates that the objects exported as a result of this partition would remain, as they are still today, the property of the Pakistani Government, and housed in Italian State Museums under the terms of a *sine die* loan.

have learnt that acceptance of the Government to entertain the IsMEO Mission has already been communicated." The most important issue, i.e. the issuance of an excavation licence including the Art. 12 (partition and export of archaeological materials), on the other hand, is still suspended. Although given for certain, it was postponed several times for formal details. With regard to the starting date of the actual excavation licence, that key-document was finally received by Tucci upon his return from Swat on 8 December 1955: "The Government of Pakistan is pleased to grant a [five-year] licence for archaeological excavation to the Istituto per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente [IsMEO], Roma (Italy)". The area chosen for the reconnaissance is from Barikot to Manglawar; the excavation areas are mainly Udegram and Manglawar (later dismissed in favour of Butkara I), surveys if authorised may be conducted at other sites. On 28 December, Tucci returned to Italy and thanked H.E. Akhtar Husain: "Your Excellency's work on behalf of this plan has been so instrumental, that I find it far from easy to adequately express my feelings of sincere gratitude".

* * *

As we know, the whole issue of the excavation licence awaited by Tucci and postponed by the Pakistani side for months and months until December 1955, arose from this legal problem: Swat was not a *de jure* Pakistani territory as it had never been British Raj territory.

The AMPA and the regulations governing the excavation and export of archaeological materials could not be applied to Swat (the Yusufzai State of Swat at the time) as it was not a part of Pakistan back then. Until the AMPA was extended to Swat, it would have remained impossible to give a legal answer to the question posed by Stein as early as 1931: "I do not know what the exact legal position is with regard to Indian States - and still less what the Wali's view, a decisive factor, would be." (see Document 312 in Olivieri 2015) That was also the problem that affected Evert Barger's expedition in Swat (1938; Barger, and Wright 1941). That archaeological work was carried outside the framework of the AMPA, both in respect of the excavation (no license) and the import from Swat to British India of archaeological artefacts (no permit). The matter recently surfaced in a brilliant study by Rafiullah Khan (2023).[19]

19 On these aspects of the Barger expedition (Barger, and Wright 1941) see Khan 2023.

So how was the issue resolved? The key-document is a demi-official letter, dated 13 March 1956 from the folder Misc. General (List-1), Serial No. 165, Bundle No. 18, now kept at the Directorate of Archives and Libraries in Peshawar. The file is entitled "Starting of a Museum in the Jehan Zeb College, Saidu Sharif, Swat State and connected correspondence therewith. File no. 3/75-Stas". T. Tanweer was the first to report on that document (Tanweer 2011). The document contains the consolidated minutes of a meeting held in Malakand two days earlier. "It seems that Tucci during his visit to Swat in 1955, had convinced the Wali to introduce AMPA 1904 [Ancient Monument Preservation Act] in Swat because after the visit of Tucci, in March 1956 Mr. Sher Afzal, the then Political Agent of the Malakand Agency (at that time including also Swat, Chitral and Dir States), in his letter to Mr. Raoul Curiel, Director (Advisor) of Archaeology in Pakistan, wrote that the Wali has no objection if the Act 1904 [AMPA] is made applicable to the Swat State. It was decided in the meeting held between P.A Malakand Agency and Wali on 11-3-1956. With the introduction of this Act in Swat State the archaeological activities found more strength and freedom. In this sense, when the Italian Mission to Swat started, their activities were carried out on firm legal footing." (Tanweer 2011: 43).[20] This decision not only set the stage for the start of legal excavations in Swat (and the export of archaeological artefacts from Swat and Pakistan as provided for in the excavation licence granted to Tucci), but also for the foundation of the future Swat Museum.[21] In my opinion, we must give credit for this, first to the Wali – who decided to limit his power with respect to this jurisdiction – certainly also to Tucci – who needed it –, but above all to Curiel. Not only was Curiel the recipient of the letter, not only does the date of this letter precede Tucci's return to Swat (August 1956), but above all it refers to a previous letter from Curiel dated 20 January 1956. We know that Tucci left Swat on 2 December 1955 with Curiel and the last time the two spoke to each other, was in Karachi on 8 December, which is the day Tucci received his licence (Olivieri 2025: fig. 7). This simple administrative fact has important legal implications. Once the licence had been issued there, Curiel wrote to Malakand on 20 January of the new year. My reconstruction is therefore as follows:

20 At the meeting was present the Chief Secretary of the Swat State Ataullah Khan as representative of the Wali. The meeting is reported in Tanweer 2011: 42, fn. 3, "Endorsement addressed to the Chief Secretary Swat State, Saidu Sharif".

21 There are some additional notes to add here to make the document dated 13 March 1956: antiquities in the possession of the Wali with the exceptions of those in *malkhana* would have been moved to the future Swat Museum ('Wali Saheb [WS] Collection') *chowkidars* or watchmen were appointed at the two sites which were mentioned in the first request of License made by Tucci. Also the antiquities in the Political Agent's office/residence were later transported to the Swat Museum, where they are registered as the 'Malakand [M] Collection').

in Swat, Curiel, Tucci, Domenico Faccenna and Felice Benuzzi, then First Secretary in the Italian Embassy in Karachi, met the Wali of Swat Maj. Gen. Miangul Jahanzeb, and the Chief Secretary of the Swat State (Ataullah Khan): a photograph bears witness to this (see below). On that occasion it is probable, if not certain, that the future plans and especially the legal question were discussed. On that occasion Curiel must have received sufficient reassurance from the Wali that the issue would be resolved. In fact, once they returned to Karachi, Curiel finally issued the longed-for licence for Tucci. At the beginning of the new year (1956) the matter was finally formalised at Malakand.

The law must have come into force for the export of split pieces with Italy in 1957-1958 and was repealed in 1975, when AMPA was abolished and the new Antiquities Act of 1975 (which no longer included the 'partition' system) was enacted.

* * *

I have already discussed the organisation and logistics of the reconnaissance in Swat in 1955 in another work of mine (Olivieri 2006). The reconnaissance took place from 28 November to 2 December and was facilitated by the support of officials and logistics provided by the Wali of the Yusufzai State of Swat through its Chief Secretary Mr. Ataullah Khan. The reconnaissance included the territories between Topdara near the State border with the Malakand tribal area, and Kalam at the upper end of the Swat valley, on both sides of the river. Of the 1955 Swat reconnaissance we have two reports: Faccenna's scientific report (six pages), and the scientific report published in *East and West* in 1958 (Tucci 1958). Faccenna foresaw the promising field of work and study that would open up, but above all he outlined in agreement with Tucci the work plan, from reconnaissance to excavation and restoration, that the Mission would systematically implement over the next seventy years. Its genesis, development, results and outcomes have been discussed in the preceding pages.

Epilogue

Interestingly, after the late 13th- early 14th century the Islamic settlement at Mt Rāja Gīrā was abandoned and during the following

centuries even the memory of the sacredness of this place, where a *jāmi*ʿ Mosque is located and where a cemetery grew up around the tomb of a revered pious Muslim, was lost.

This makes even more evident the need for boosting investigations and further researches on the important phases related to the period immediately before the arrival of the Yusufzai Pashtuns, when Swāt started being visited by the Tibetan pilgrims searching for the ancient Uḍḍiyāna.

These are themes anticipated by Giuseppe Tucci in his 1963 booklet: the role of the Jahangir dynasty, the slow collapse of the non-Muslim Dardic cultures of pre-modern Swāt (e.g. the events of the two Barikot summarized in Olivieri, Sesana 2023), the slow merging of the Dardic wooden architecture into the Islamic tradition, etc. (see Figs 2.43-2.45). While most of the aspects related to the development of the Miangul dynasty and the establishment of the Yusufzai State of Swāt (1917-1969) have already been studied (Olivieri 2015b), the history of the phase between the 13th and 17th centuries, for example the role of the Jahangira dynasty (16th-17th centuries), still remains largely to be written.

Apart from these aspects, by and large, all the research themes intuited and proposed by Giuseppe Tucci are still on the table. After seventy years of research, Swāt has become, without any doubt, one of the best studied parts, and possibly the best excavated region, of ancient Eurasia. Nonetheless, or maybe exactly for that reason, many questions, new and old, are still to be answered.

One thing is certain: the answers that Swāt will give us, will reply to questions which are of the utmost importance for the entire Eurasia. Why did Swāt become one of the major settlement areas of the Indo-Iranian populations around 1200 BCE? Why was Swāt mentioned amongst the major rivers of the RgVeda? Why was Swāt, a relatively non-descriptive corner of the Hindukush, important in the Buddhist vision? Why did Buddhism suddenly collapse and disappear? Why was Swāt targeted by Alexander the Great, and by all the great invaders including the British army? Why did these invaders create or tried to establish there permanent settlements? Which are the reasons behind the unchallenged agricultural peculiarity of Swāt throughout the millennia?

We moved ahead the objectives of the studies, and we are now exploring them in a new collaborative way. The most interesting aspect of Tucci's approach was the multi-disciplinary methodology. Tucci, in a period when philology and history of religion were separated fields, disconnected from archaeology and hard sciences, anticipated a model of integrated study

where all the concerned disciplines were converging in the reconstruction of the social, economic and spiritual ancient history.

Today we are moving in the same direction, with new and most powerful arrows in our quivers. With the help of genetics, bio-archaeology, micro-stratigraphic excavation, archaeometry, geological and paleoclimatic studies, the tridimensional reality behind the manifestations of religious architecture and art, and the rise and fall of great Empires, the relationships between 'centres' and 'periphery' is becoming more and more clear and understandable. Swāt, we can confirm it seventy years later, is a fundamental chapter in the greater Eurasian history.

G. Tucci (left) and R. Curiel (right) with the Wali (at the center). Ataullah Khan and F. Benuzzi at the sides (Swat, December 1955) (Photo ISMEO)

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Chronological List

With the contribution of Ehsan Shavarebi

Legend:
numis. = only on numismatic basis
epigr. = on epigraphic basis; gen
genom. = on genomic basis.
Diacritics are omitted.

Historical Period			Date	Barikot Macrophase
Local Dynasties	Main Dynasty	Sovrain		
Yusufzai/Miangul	British India		19th–20th cent. CE	10
	Mughal		16th–19th cent. CE	
Dardic	Timurid		13th–15th cent. CE	
Khwarazm-Shah			Ca. 1215–1230	9a-b
Ghurids			Ca. 1180s–1215 CE	
Ghaznavids		Khusraw Malik	1160–1186 CE	
		successors		
		Mahmud	998–1030 CE	
Hindu-shahi		Jayapala Deva (*epigr.*)	Ca. 964–1001 CE	8b
		Bhima Deva (*numis./epigr.*)	Mid-10th CE	
		Samanta Deva (*numis.*)	Ca. 870–1000 CE	
		Khudarayaka (*numis.*)	Ca. 870s CE	
		Vakka Deva (*numis.*)	2nd half of 9th cent. CE	
		Spalapati Deva (*numis.*)	Ca. 824–870 CE	
Turki-shahi		Tagin Khorasan-Shah	Late 7th to early 8th cent. CE	8a
		Śri Ṣahi	Mid-7th cent. CE	
Alkhan		Lakhana	Late 5th to early 6th cent. CE	7
Kidarite		Kidara	Late 4th to early 5th cent. CE	

[continue]

Historical Period			Date	Barikot Macrophase
Local Dynasties	Main Dynasty	Sovrain		
Kushano-Sasanian		Shapur II	309–379 CE	6
		"Meze" (?)	Late 3rd to mid-4th cent. CE	5b
		Kawad		
		Peroz I (5)		
Kushans		*successors*		
		Kanishka II	Ca. 230–247 CE or later	5a
		Vasudeva I	Ca. 190–230 CE or later	
		Huvishka	Ca. 151–190 CE or later	4a-b
		Kanishka I	Ca. 127–151 CE or later	
		Vima Kadphises	Ca. 113–127 CE or later	
		Soter Megas (Vima Takto)	Ca. 90–113 CE or later	
		Kujula Kadphises	Ca. 50–90 CE	
Odi	Indo-Parthian (Pahlava)	*successors*		3b
		Gondophares	Ca. 30/32–55/57 CE	
	Indo-Scythian (Saka)	*successors*	Mid-1st cent. BCE to early 1st cent. CE	
		Azes [II]		
		Azilises		
		Azes [I]		
		Maues	Early 1st cent. BCE	

[continue]

Historical Period			Date	Barikot Macrophase
Local Dynasties	Main Dynasty	Sovrain		
	Indo-Greek	Hermaios	Ca. 90–70 BCE	3a.2–4
		Archebios	Ca. 90–80 BCE	
		successors		
		Antialkidas	Ca. 115–95 BCE	
		Strato I	Ca. 130–110 BCE	
		Zoilos I	Ca. 130–120 BCE	
		Menander I	Ca. 165–130 BCE	
Autonomous rulers of Taxila–Gandhara (*numis.*)		Antimachos II	Ca. 174–165 BCE	
		Pantaleon and Agathokles	Ca. 190–180 BCE	
	Graeco-Bactrian	Demetrius I	Ca. 200–190 BCE	3a.1
Maurya		Chandragupta to Aśoka	Ca. 305–232 BCE	2b
Assakenoi/Ashvaka (Cleophis and Assakenos)	Macedonian	Alexander and Nikanor	Ca. 326–325 BCE	2a
	Achaemenid	Darius I and successors	Ca. 518–326 BCE	
Interphase			Ca. 800–500 BCE	Interphase 3
Swāt Protohistoric Graveyard (late Bronze Age to early Iron Age)		Central Asian nomads/Iranian farmers (*genon.*)	Ca. 1200–800 BCE	1
Interphase			Ca. 1400–1200 BCE	Interphase 2
Late Harappan/Cemetery H (Bronze Age)			Ca. 1700–1400 BCE	0
Interphase			Ca. 2000–1700 BCE	Interphase 1
Northern Neolithic			Ca. 3000–2000 BCE	

Illustrations (2)

Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan

ISMEO / Ca' Foscari University of Venice

2.1 The landscape of Saidu Sharif, seen from Nort-East

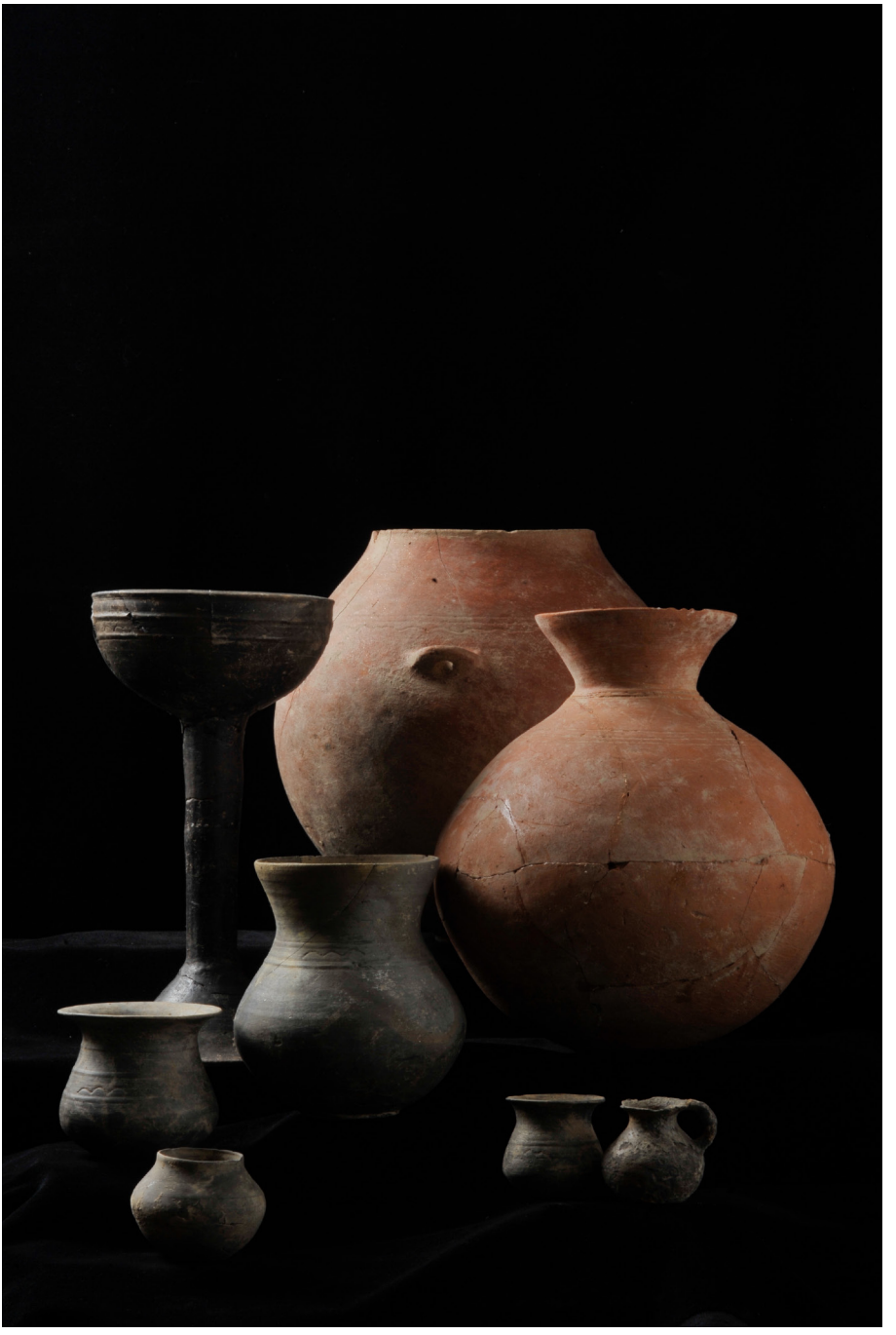
2.2 Ferrying the Swāt River: no longer a necessity but fun

2.3 Entering the shrine of the Aḵhund of Swāt

2.4 The hatter: a trade that is always in fashion

2.5 The potter today: a disappearing trade

2.6 The Buddhist shrine at Gumbat (c. 100-300 CE) after excavations and conservation restoration (see Fig. 1.22).



2.7 Vases part of a grave furniture dated c. 1200-900 BCE (Iron Age; Swat Museum).

2.8 Terracotta figurine from 1200-900 BCE (miniaturistic; Iron Age; Swat Museum).

2.9 Tomb dated c. 1200-900 BCE (Iron Age)

2.10 Sargah-sar, Bronze Age rock painting: ploughing and sowing scene (photo in black and white; the paintings are in red, see Fig. 2.11).

2.11 Late Antique rock painting: scene of 'near-death' shamanistic experience

2.12 Top view of the Barikot apsidal temple (mid-3rd century CE) and its later phases (North is at the bottom).

2.13 Barikot: post-Mauryan terracotta female figurine (miniaturistic; c. 200 BCE; Swat Museum).

2.14 Barikot: panel with Maya's dream scene: the conception of Siddhartha (l. 22.3 cm.; mid-1st century CE; Swat Museum).

2.15 Amluk-dara: panel with the birth of Siddhartha
(l. 48.5 cm.; 2nd century CE; Swat Museum).

2.16 Barikot: fragment with the birth of Siddhartha
(h.18 cm.; mid-1st century CE; Swat Museum).

2.17 Barikot: panel presentation of the infant Siddhartha to the sage Asita, who predicts his future (h. 15.4 cm.; mid-1st century CE; Swat Museum).

2.18 Saidu Sharif I, main stupa: Siddhartha's schoolmaster
(h. tot.: 45 cm. c. 50 CE; Swat Museum).

2.19 Saidu Sharif I: small panel with Buddha on throne with traces of colour (h. 9.7 cm.; c. 150 CE; Swat Museum).

2.20 Gumbat: the realized gaze of the Enlightened (Buddha) (h. tot. 21 cm.; early-2nd century CE; Swat Museum).

2.21 Barikot: the realized gaze of the Enlightened (Buddha, stucco) (h. 13.6 cm.; 3rd century CE; Swat Museum).

2.22 Amluk-dara: Putto holding a festoon of plants: note the pomegranates, maybe a symbol of the Buddha's sublimated physical body (l. 26.5 cm.; early-2nd century CE; Swat Museum).

2.23 Gumbat: a frieze with Nilotic figures (l. 37 cm.; early-2nd century CE; Swat Museum).

2.24 Barikot: a panel representing a columned stupa (h. 28 cm.; mid-1st century CE; Swat Museum).

2.25 Barikot: Buddhist votive tray and votive lamp (2nd century CE; Swat Museum).

2.26 The landscape of the Swāt valley: the Barikot hill at dawn (North is on the left).

2.27 Amluk-dara: the Main Stupa (c. 100-800 CE).

2.28 The Buddhist sanctuary in Saidu Sharif I (c. 50-300 CE) at the end of the excavation and conservation works.

2.29 Barikot: stele of a bearded deity holding a wine-goblet and the severed head of a goat: unknknow deity, resembling the aged Dyonisos (h. 17.2 cm.; mid-2nd century CE; Swat Museum).

2.30 Saidu Sharif I: lion's head. The statue, part of a pair, was probably guarding the entrance to the Main Stupa (h. 27 cm.; c. 50 CE; Swat Museum).

2.31 Amluk-dara: a stucco pilaster (mid-3rd century CE).

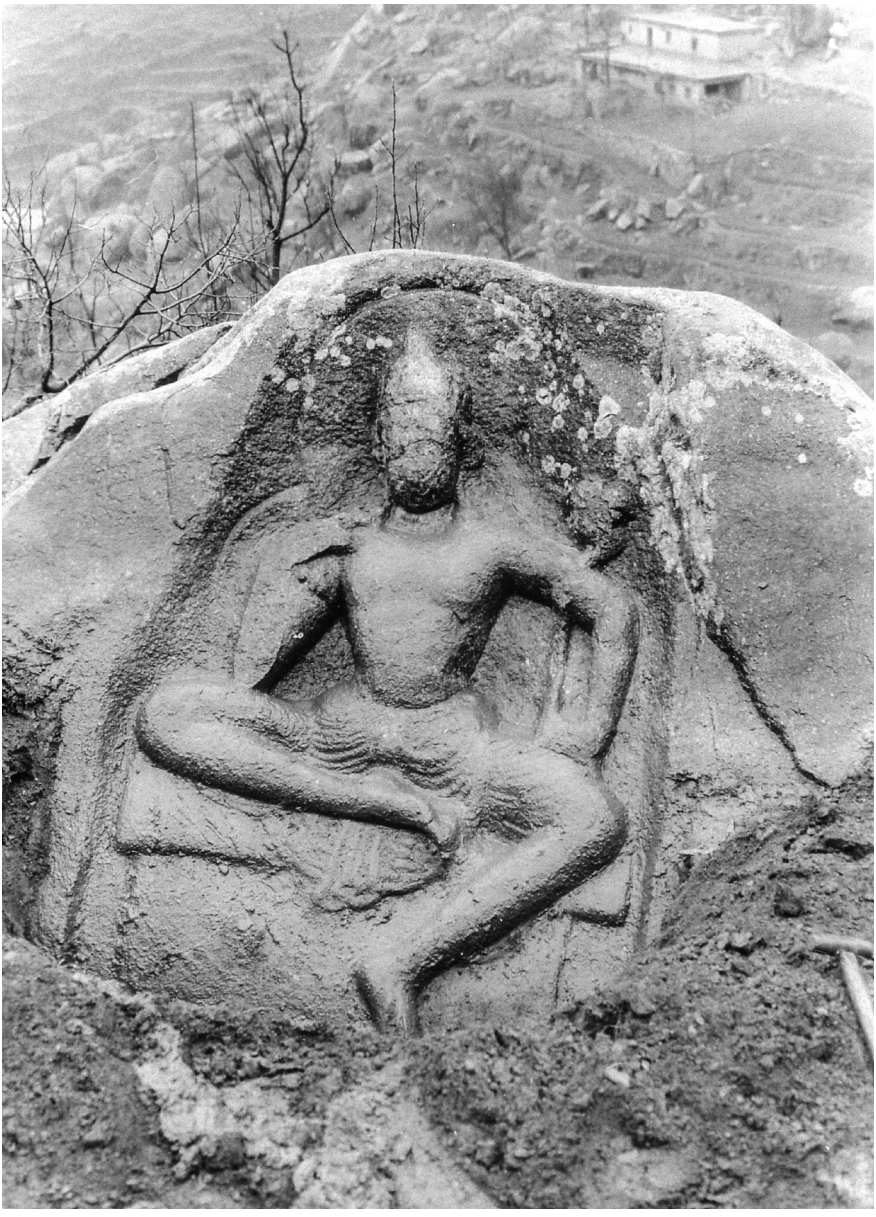
2.32 Barikot: stele of Hariti, protector of children (h. 22 cm.; mid-2nd century CE; Swat Museum).

2.33a-b Two views of the Acropolis of Barikot (c. 100-1000 CE) during conservation works.
2.33a: 2024 (Cf. Fig. 2.34); North is to the right.
2.33b: 2023; North is to the left; Mt Ilam can be seen in the background.

2.34 The NE corner of the Acropolis of Barikot during conservation (2022; Cf. Fig. 2.33a).

2.35 a-b Workers excavating at Barikot (Cf. Tucci's Figs. 1.32-34)

2.36a Rock relief from the Jambil valley: the Bodhisattva Padmapani, protector of pilgrims (7th-8th century CE). The images were located along the paths that lead to sacred places.



2.36b Another rock relief from the Jambil valley: a life size Bodhisattva Padmapani rediscovered in 1989.

2.37 a-b The rock Buddha of Shaḵhorai/Jahanabad damaged by the Taliban in 2007 and restored by the Mission in 2016 (see Fig. 1.25).

2.38 Swāt: the evolution of form. A small bronze statuette depicting a Bodhisattva (h. 36 cm; 7th-8th century CE) (Copyright MNAOR/MUCIV, Rome).

2.39 Swāt Museum: Vajrayana relief depicting a siddha (h. 94 cm.; from Swāt).

2.40 Barikot: the Vajirasthāna inscription now in the Lahore Museum (h. 23 cm.; early-11th century CE).

2.41 Barikot: late ancient tsatsas
(h. 6 cm.; 11th century CE; Swat Museum).

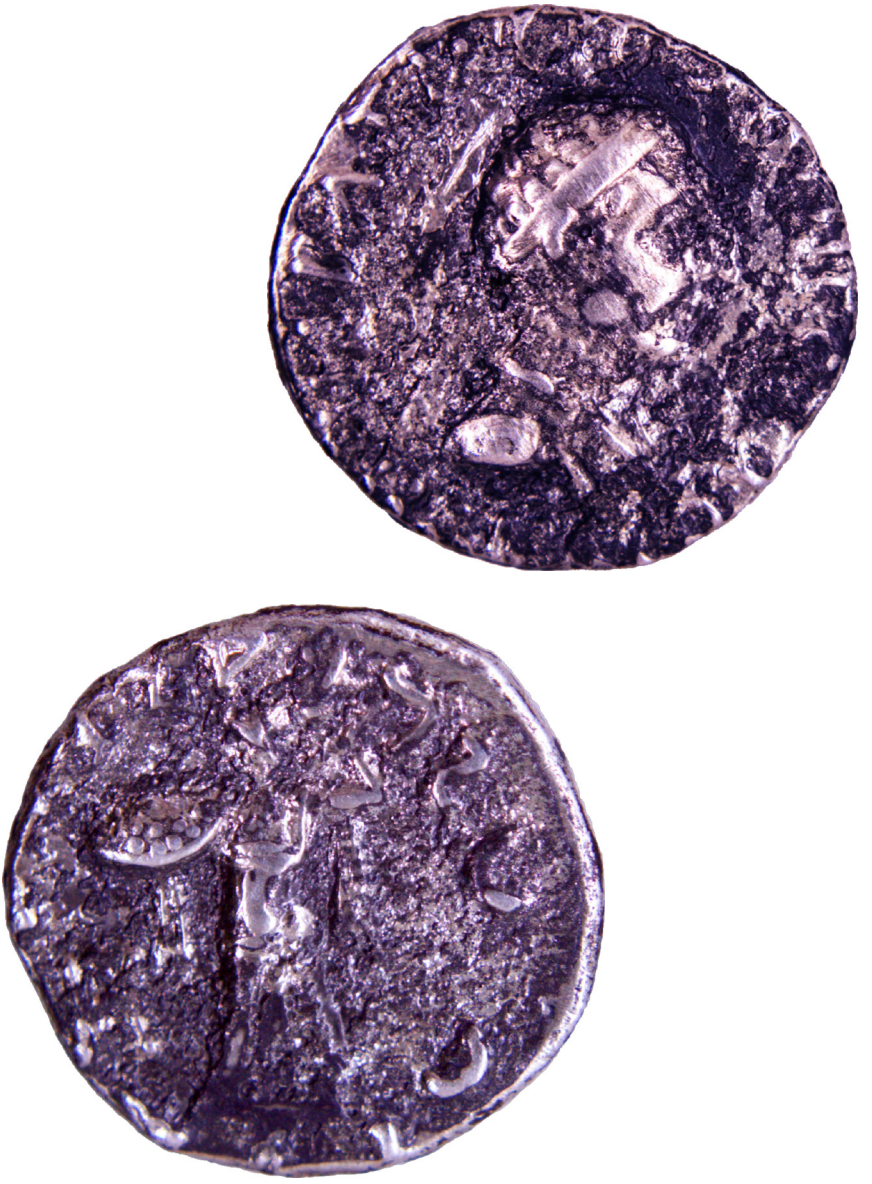
2.42 The Ghazvavid mosque at Udegram (11th century).

2.43 A traditional wooden mosque of Swāt, one of the few surviving ones.

2.44 A traditional chest from Swāt decorated with pillars motifs

2.45 a-b The art of music and the art of wood tuned well together: two traditional string instruments from the Mission's collection in the Swat Museum.

2.46 Barikot: copper alloy coin, post-Mauryan local issue of Taxila–Pushkalavati (2nd century BCE; Swat Museum).



2.47 Barikot: silver coin, Indo-Greek:
Menander I (late phase, ca. 144–133 BCE; Swat Museum).

2.48 Barikot: copper alloy coin, Indo-Scythian:
Azes [II] (late 1st century BCE–early 1st century CE; Swat Museum).

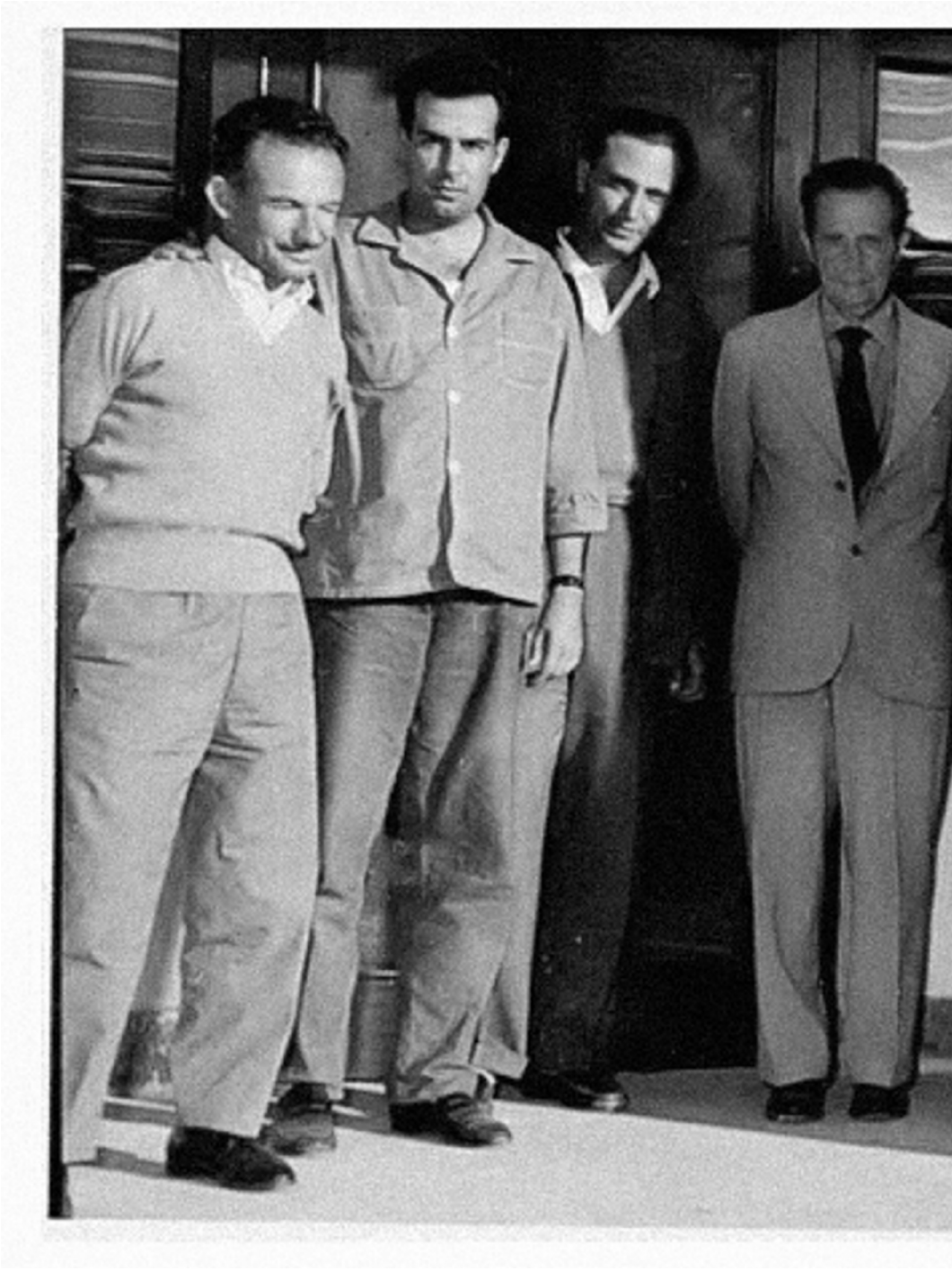
2.49 Barikot: copper alloy coin, Kushan:
Soter Megas (late 1st–early 2nd century CE; Swat Museum).

2.50 Barikot: copper alloy coin, Kushan:
Kanishka I (2nd century CE; Swat Museum).

2.51 Barikot: copper alloy coin, Kushano-Sasanian: Shapur (4th century CE; Swat Museum).

2.52 Barikot: silver coin, Iranian Huns: Kidara (4th/5th century CE; Swat Museum).

2.53 Barikot: copper alloy coin, Hindu Shahi:
Vakka Deva (9th/10th century CE; Swat Museum).



2.54 Swāt 1956: V. Caroli, G. Graziani, D. Faccenna, G. Tucci,
H.A. Miangul Aurangzeb the Wali Ahad, F.A. Khan (D.G. Archaeology),
F. Bonardi (Copyright Miangul Archives).

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